

animals&men

THE JOURNAL OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



EXPEDITION REPORT: GAMBIA 2006

Kentish BHMs, Big Cats and rables, The purple necked wallaby, new thylacine photo? Giant earthworms, news, reviews and more..

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EDITORIAL

By Jonathan Downes



Dear Friends,

So, here we are at the end of another year, and what a momentous year it has been. It has been a year of highs and lows; the major low being - of course - the death of my father, and one of the many highs being the CFZ Gambia expedition which was endowed in his name.

Just as we were going to press we had another major high - the opening moves in what is likely to become the largest, and most important CFZ project for years - the search for giant eels in the Lake District.

The last few years have not been easy ones for me, and it was somewhat of a shock to realise that it has been two years since I had done any fieldwork at all (with the exception of two days at Loch Ness last winter), and over three years since I led a major CFZ expeditionary force into battle!

But the team were magnificent; the three newbies (Mark, Corinna, and Lisa) performed exceptionally well, and I have high hopes that when we return next year, it will be a pretty splendid occasion.

This is where you come in! We need more CFZ foot soldiers than ever before on this project next year. We are confident that we shall be at the lakes during the vast majority of the warm months, and we are

going to need a heck of a lot of logistical support. We will need people prepared to man subsidiary camps along the shores of the lakes, to pilot boats, make notes, scan the water with binoculars, and take photographs. We need people who can swim, people with data entry skills, and people who can cook :). Basically, if you can do anything we can probably utilise you.

If you are interested in becoming involved with what I confidently believe is going to be the biggest cryptozoological investigation since Operation Deep Scan, and quite possibly bigger, then please give me a ring, or email me.

Next year is gonna be a biggie. As well as the lakeland investigations, we have the opening of the museum, and another Weird Weekend to look forward to. Despite the ongoing struggle to keep our heads above water in an increasingly complicated world, this really is continuing to be a splendid adventure...

Slainté

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Downes".

Jon Downes (Director, CFZ)

"THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY ARE NOT DONE"

THE FACULTY OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



"In her abnormalities, nature reveals her secrets." (Goethe)

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NEWSFILE

Edited and compiled by Richard Freeman and Jonathan Downes



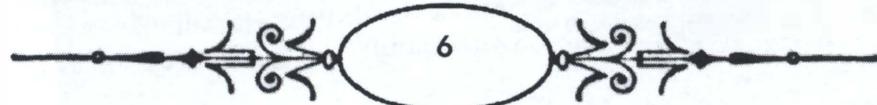
A snake with the ability to change its colour has been found in the rainforested heart of Borneo. Researchers from Germany and the US discovered the water snake's chameleon-like behaviour by accident when they put it into a dark bucket. The newly-described snake may exist only in one river basin.

Found in the Kapuas river in the Betung Kerihun National Park in Kalimantan (the Indonesian portion of Borneo), it belongs to the *Enhydris* genus of rear-fanged water snakes and has been named *Enhydris gyii*. It is about 50cm [18 inches] long, and poisonous.

The new species was described by Mark Auliya from the Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum Alexander Koenig in Bonn, and John Murphy and Harold Voris from the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago.

"I put the reddish-brown snake in a dark bucket," he said. "When I retrieved it a few minutes later, it was almost entirely white." Unlike the chameleon, it is presumably not changing colour for camouflage. In the last 10 years, more than 350 new animal and plant species have been discovered on Borneo.

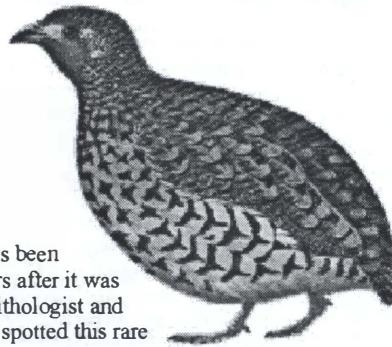
NEW AND REDISCOVERED



SEND ME THE BILL!

■ Bush-Quail seen after 99 years

The shy Manipur Bush-Quail (*Perdicula manipurensis*) has been rediscovered in the Manas National Park in Assam 75 years after it was last sighted in the world, and after 99 years in Assam. Ornithologist and Deputy Commissioner of Baksa, Anwaruddin Choudhury, spotted this rare bird during an inspection work of the Embankment and Drainage Department with Deputy Director of the national park, Ritesh Bhattacharjee, on June 6.



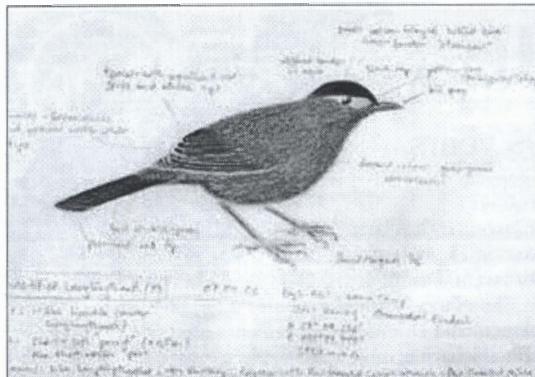
"One bird was seen twice at about 2.30 pm on the track that was covered with grass in the Panbari range of the park. I noticed the grey back which is [a] distinctive [feature] of this bird and finally confirmed that it was Manipur Bush-quail," Mr. Choudhury said.

The authentic record of the last sighting of the bird in Assam was from Mornoi in Kokrajhar district from where birds were obtained for the British Museum, the American Museum of Natural History and the Bombay Natural History Society in 1905-07. The bird lost its habitat due to encroachment of land for agriculture and human habitation in the grasslands, overgrazing by domestic stock and hunting, including live capture for food, he added.

■ New Bird Discovered in India

An amateur bird-watcher has found the first new bird species to be discovered in India in over 50 years. The strikingly coloured species was identified from feathers and photos taken in remote forests in the northeast part of the country. No specimen was taken, because "we thought the bird was just too rare for one to be





killed," said Ramana Athreya, the bird's discoverer, in a statement. Named *Bugun liocichla*, the small bird is described as a type of babbler, a diverse family of birds that usually live in tropical forests. The species has olive-grey body plumage, a black cap, orange-yellow eye markings, with yellow, red, and white patches on its wings.

Measuring 8 inches (20 centimeters) in length, the bird is named after the Bugun, a native people who live on the edge of the sanctuary. Because the *Bugun liocichla* is so distinctive and doesn't appear to fear humans, experts say it must be extremely rare or it would have been discovered before now. The known population of *Bugun liocichla* consists of only 14 individuals and includes three breeding pairs.

"Most of the sightings have been on hillsides covered by shrubs and small trees where larger trees have been logged for timber. This liocichla species was found through their core area," he said.

Although these sightings are within a protected wildlife sanctuary, the birds may still be threatened by development, Thomas warns. *"Sadly, they are planning to put a road right through their core area,"* he said.

Tiger trap goes cuckoo

A camera-trap operated by a joint Indonesian and British team of scientists surveying for tigers in a former logging concession close to Kerinci Seblat National Park in northern Sumatra, Indonesia, has photographed a Sumatran Ground-cuckoo *Carpococcyx viridis*, one of Asia's rarest birds. The endemic ground-cuckoo has only been recorded once previously in the last 90 years, when a bird was trapped in southern Sumatra in 1997. Prior to that, only eight specimen records existed. *"We've photographed Rhinoceros Hornbills and Great Argus before but we couldn't believe it when we photographed a Sumatran Ground-cuckoo,"* said Yoan Dinata, field team leader of Fauna & Flora International's Indonesia Programme.



"This exciting discovery highlights the importance of conserving formerly selectively logged concessions around national parks. Sumatra's lowland rainforests will be destroyed through illegal, unsustainable logging activities unless we protect them now." said Sukianto Lusli, Executive Director of BirdLife Indonesia.

"Re-finding this Critically Endangered species close to Kerinci Seblat is especially exciting," said project manager Dr Matthew Linkie of the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology at the University of Kent. *"We've recently shown how critical Kerinci Seblat is for the long-term survival of Sumatran tigers [a reference to a study published in the Journal of Applied Ecology], but finding the Sumatran Ground-cuckoo gives me hope, because it was photographed in disturbed forest that had been left to recover near the national park,"* he added.

New urchin leaves eBay-ers all at sea

Starting bid: US \$9.50 [Place Bid](#)

End time: Aug 15 at 19:29:45 PDT (2 days)

Shipping costs: US \$4.00
US Postal Service Priority Mail®

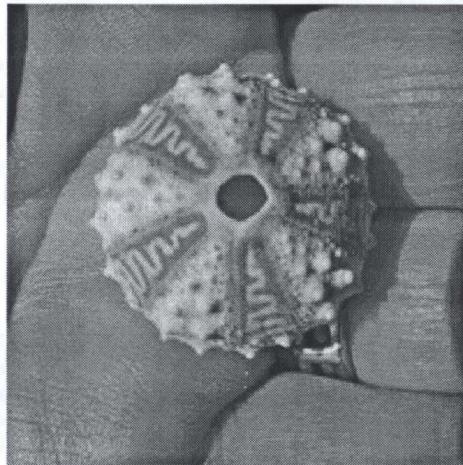
Ships to: United States

Item location: Montana, United States

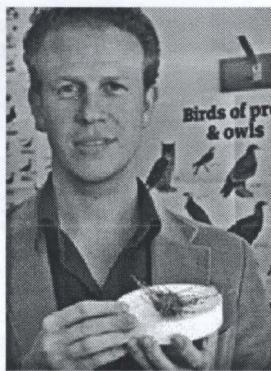
History: 0 bids

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It is not the first time that descriptions of goods on eBay have been less than accurate, but this time the sellers could be forgiven: the sea urchin up for sale was of a species new to science.



"THERE'LL BE NO ACCUSATIONS UNDER THE SEA"

Close investigation by Simon Coppard of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature at the Natural History Museum in London, showed that the urchins, which came from the seas around the islands of New Caledonia in the Pacific, did not belong to any known species. He named them *Coelopleurus exquisitus* after the colourful markings on the creatures' spines and shell. Sea urchins regularly appear for sale on the web and it is not uncommon for scientists to get emails from confused collectors asking for help in discerning exactly what species they have. However, large numbers appearing for sale recently led to an explosion of interest. He says that so little of the seafloor has been examined in any detail, it is likely there are a lot more out there.

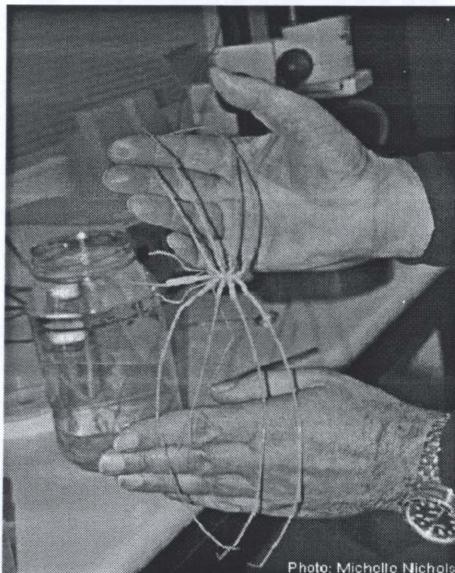


Photo: Michelle Nichalo

One of the new species (incorrectly named as *Coelopleurus interruptus*) was on sale on eBay with a starting price of \$9.50. More than 15,000 new species are added to the zoological list each year, although this is the first time Dr Coppard has named one.

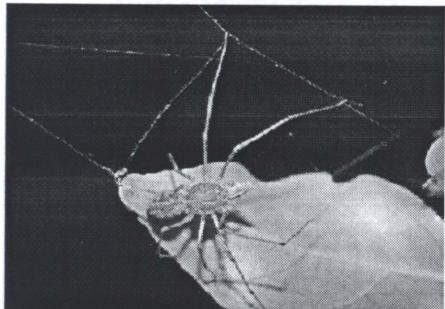
New sea spider species found in icy waters

More than 10 new species of sea spiders have been identified, including some with legs spanning half a metre. The creatures were collected by the Australian Antarctic Division from the icy waters around Heard Island, near Antarctica, three years ago. They have been kept on ice until recently, when Melbourne researcher David Staples began cataloguing them. He has identified 29 species, and 10 of them are new to science.

New species of spiny lobster

Cape Town marine scientists have just discovered a new species of giant kreef, or spiny lobster, but it's possible that it has been exploited close to extinction by fishermen who have mistaken it for another lobster species.

The new species, a member of the deep-water lobster genus *Palinurus* and weighing up to 4kg, was caught by a Spanish vessel fishing at the Walters Shoals, 1,100km east of Durban.



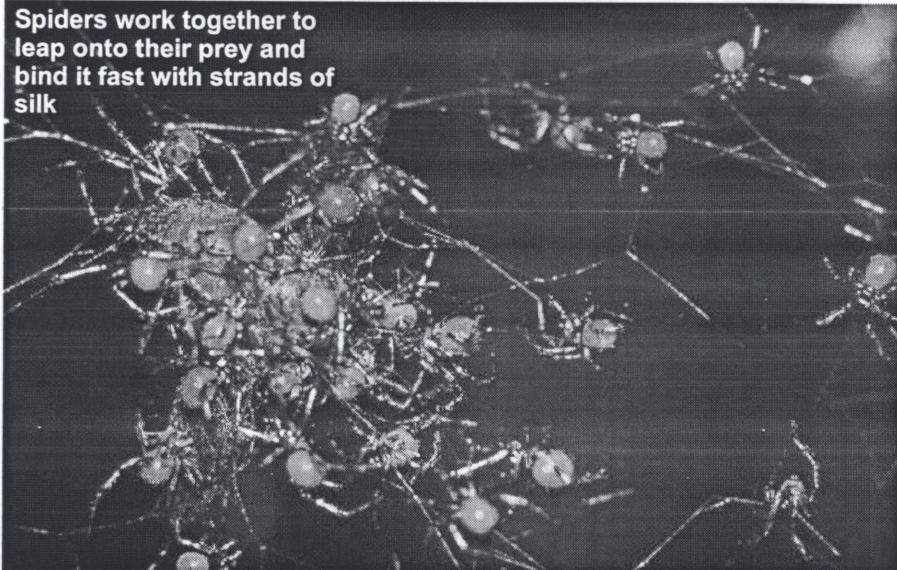
**'NOT ALL
SPIDERS SIT
UPON THE BACK.
DOCTOR'.**

**Spiders work together to
leap onto their prey and
bind it fast with strands of
silk**

Spitting spiders surprise

Jeremy Miller was hunting black widow spiders in a Madagascar forest last winter when he came upon a curious fist-size web made of leaves, branches and debris woven together with thin, tough strands of spider silk.

No black widow ever made such a web, but when Miller examined the tiny creatures inside, he realized he'd discovered a new species of "spitting spider." Like other spitting spiders, the new species traps its prey by spitting out a stream of sticky poison, but unlike the others, it communes with its own kind in unusually cooperative colonies and shares its food with family and friends.



Most adult spiders are solitary creatures that spin their webs alone, shun their fellows and get together with others of their tribe only to eat them or mate with them, but the members of Miller's new spitting spider species are different because they live and work together so closely, he says.

"They all hide during the day, but at night they come out of their nests to do a little web maintenance, do a little mating, and do a little eating, together with all the others teaming up in the colony. And what's surprising is that there's no aggression among the nest mates; they work together on their webs, they eat together, and mature males and females, along with juveniles in the colony, all join together to consume what they kill." Miller says.

The adult spiders are tiny: less than a quarter of an inch long, but they have a powerful weapon to catch their frequently much-larger prey. An adult spits out a mixture of venom and a sticky glue-like silk in a stream that can reach 10 times farther than its own body length and virtually immobilize any moth or fly careless enough to become a target. Miller watched three episodes where two spiders worked cooperatively to capture their prey, and then everyone - adults and juveniles together - shared the banquet. The new species has been named *Scytodes specialis*.

Miller observes that each colony seems to hold an equal number of males and females that have almost no contact with any other colonies. So it appears that all the spiders in a colony mate with their siblings again and again until all members end up related to all the others, he says. This is important in evolutionary terms, according to Miller, because it suggests that natural selection - in a Darwinian sense - is operating on entire colonies in these Mascarene spiders, rather than on individuals.

"It's the colony as a unit that will compete against all the other colonies to evolve," Miller says.

His report on the new species will appear in the upcoming issue of the *Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences*.

Society-focused spiders Live and hunt together

Spiders are not famous for their caring, sharing nature.

Unlike insects such as ants, it is virtually unheard of for arachnids to live in societies that employ tactics and team work. So the discovery in Ecuador of spiders nesting in family-based communities and hunting in packs was a surprise find for Leticia Avilés, an arachnid expert at the University of British Columbia in Canada. According to Avilés, there are over 39,000 identified spider species.

While she has seen just over 20 species cooperate, she has never encountered any species quite like *Theridion nigroannulatum*.

The spiders live in nests that house up to several thousand individuals which hunt by hanging threads from low lying leaves. They then hide upside down, beneath the leaves waiting for prey.

When an insect flies into the strands a group of spiders drop down and throw sticky webbing over it. To finish off the ambush they inject venom with their tiny jaws.

The spiders carry their kill back to the nest and share it with all of the others in the community. "It's truly remarkable," says Avilés. "Not only do the spiders cooperate during the kill, but if the prey is large they take turns carrying it back."

Avilés discovered vast differences in colony sizes. Most colonies were just a few dozen spiders, but occasionally a colony population would soar into the thousands, declining to multiple small colonies again within days.

"We have no idea what controls the sizes of these colonies, but what we do know is that they must have unbelievably high reproductive potentials to achieve such large populations so quickly," Avilés told *New Scientist*.

A further mystery is why the female spiders come in two different sizes. Among social insects, when females differ in size it is due to a division of labour. Bees are a classic example: large females lay eggs and small females search for food. With spiders this has not been observed before - *T. nigroannulatum* could be the first.

Researcher finds new species of Alaska arachnid

Graduate biology student Matt Bowser was out collecting bugs when he found a thumbtack-sized daddy longlegs, or harvestman, in the Kenai Peninsula's Mystery Hills, in Alaska. Bowser, a University of Alaska student, brought samples back to his lab at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge,

where he is helping federal managers conduct a comprehensive study of refuge creatures. Thumbing through his books, he couldn't find a daddy longlegs to match it. Neither could a harvestman expert at Texas Tech University, where Bowser sent a sample. That internationally recognized expert, Texas Tech Natural Science Research Laboratory associate James Cokendolpher, classified it as a new species and is now collaborating with Bowser on a peer-reviewed article describing it. Finding the distinguishing factor for this daddy longlegs took some prying. Bowser said the easiest way to identify many arachnids is by the genitals, and when he cut one open to get at the penis, he noticed it was different, with hairs growing in a direction he hadn't seen before. Differences in the invert world can be subtle. On the outside, the creature is a couple shades of brown, with beige spots. It is about 5 millimeters across when stretched out, compared to the 9 millimeters of the common, grey-brown household daddy longlegs, which is an Old World import.



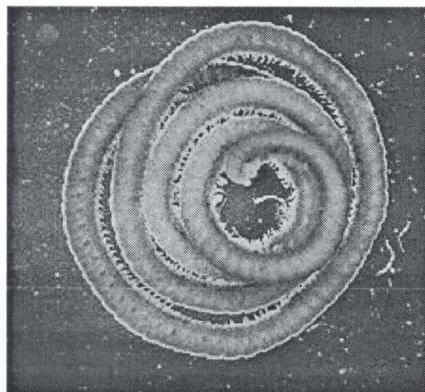
A giant beetle unseen in the UK for 300 years and rare anywhere in the world has been discovered in Llanelli. Startled workers at a furniture restorers almost smashed the bug to

bits with a hammer in their fear before cooler heads prevailed. Others believed the 2.6 inches long bug, with two antennae up to 4 inches long, was a child's plastic toy brought in as a joke. In fact it turned out to be an extremely rare Capricorn beetle looking like a frightening throwback to the age of dinosaurs. Staff at Foothold Group, in Llanelli, south Wales, use recycled wood to make new furniture, and saw the big bug crawl out of a pile of English oak. When it proved to be home to a beetle grub and a second, dead, beetle, they were more fearful than pleased with their rare find. *"I was gobsmacked because it was bloody huge for a beetle,"* said Tony Giles, the workshop manager.

Local entomologist Ian Morgan was called and he immediately recognised the importance of the find. He told the *Western Mail* in Cardiff: *"This type of long-horn beetle is supposed to be have been extinct in the UK since 1700. This is the first time in centuries that it has been seen here in Wales. It is a male, and he was found in timber labelled English oakwood, so it makes you question whether this massive beast is alive in England too. I realised it was something special as soon as I saw it. It is very rare and is the largest long-horned beetle in Europe. There is also a possibility that he might have been imported from central Europe. The beetle depends on very large oaks for its grubs to feed on over a long period. It is illegal to kill it anywhere."*

LEGS AKIMBO

U.S. biologists say *Illacme plenipes*, a millipede with up to 750 legs that was last seen 80 years ago, has been found in California.

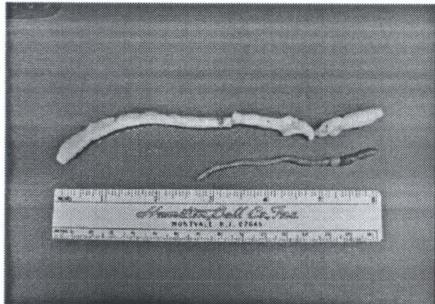


Biologists Paul Marek and Jason Bond discovered the millipede in the California Floristic Province, south of Santa Cruz. Scientists said the millipede lives nowhere else on Earth. Petra Sierwald of the Field Museum in Chicago confirmed the find after the biologists sent her the leggiest - 660 legs - of the 20 specimens uncovered by their initial search, the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported. The 2-inch-long specimen, only half a millimeter wide, was preserved in alcohol.

The millipede was first described - and last seen - in 1926 by Howard Frederick Loomis, who spent part of his career at the Field Museum, and Orator Fuller Cook, the newspaper said.

THERE'S A WORM AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GARDEN

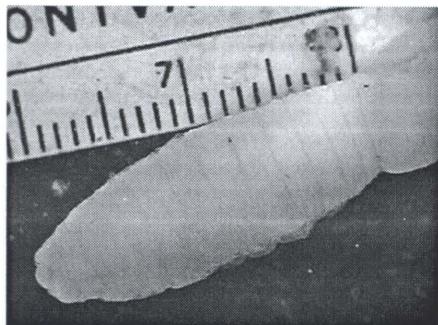
It's 3 feet long, pinkish in color, smells like a lily and must be saved from extinction,



conservationists said, asking the government to protect the Giant Palouse Earthworm under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

Long thought extinct, the worm was rediscovered occupying tiny swatches of the heavily farmed Palouse region along the Washington-Idaho border.

"This worm is the stuff that legends and fairy tales are made of," worm supporter Steve Paulson declared. *"What kid wouldn't want to play with a 3-foot-long, lily smelling, soft pink worm that spits?"*



GIANT EARTHWORMS

Giant earthworms are known from several places around the world. One of the most notable is the Gippsland giant earthworm (*Megascolides australis*), that can reach 3 meters long and 2cm in diameter. It is found only in the Gippsland in Victoria, Australia. This huge worm was first discovered by European settlers in 1878. They live in subsoil of blue, grey, or red clays soil stream banks and some south or west facing hills.

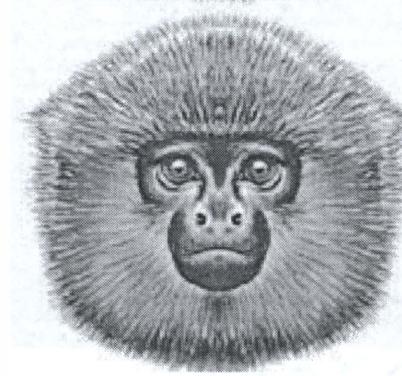
These worms create deep burrow systems and require water in their environment to respire. These giant annelids rarely leave their moist burrows. They have long lifespans for invertebrates and can take 5 years to reach maturity. They mate in the warmer months and produce large egg sacks which are laid in their burrows. When these worms hatch in 12 months they are already 20 cm long.

In December 2005, a delicate eight-week operation to relocate 620 giant Gippsland earthworms was completed in Victoria. The threatened species need to find a new home because of the pending reconstruction of the South Gippsland Highway near their burrow. Alan Yen from the Department of Primary Industries says all the worms were moved by hand. "We did a series of experiments over 12 months and we decided that the best thing to do was flood the burrow system with water from behind," he said. "So the colony being on a hill, we dug holes above from where we were going to get the worms from and so we dug them out manually."

The giant worms can sometimes be heard in their habitat making weird gurgling sounds underground. Doubtless, this has led to aboriginal legends of spirits. Other species of giant worm can be found in South Africa, Madagascar, and South America.

'THE NATURE OF MONKEY WAS IRREPRESSIBLE!'

As well as discovering two new species of monkey; *Callicebus stephennashi* (above) and *C. bernhardi* (below), Dutch scientist Marc van Roosmalen says he has also discovered 20 more



species in the Amazon, which are as yet unnamed. *"This once again demonstrates how little we know about biodiversity. These are the 37th and 38th new primate species described since 1990,"* said Conservation International's President Russell Mittermeier, a co-author of the scientific descriptions.

Callicebus stephennashi is named for Stephen Nash, an artist at CI who has contributed to primate conservation through his scientific illustrations. *Callicebus bernhardi* is named for the Netherlands' Prince Bernhard, who established the Order of the Golden Ark award to honour conservationists. Both van Roosmalen and Mittermeier have received the Golden Ark.

"I didn't realize the Amazon was so poorly known until I started finding all these new animals," van Roosmalen said. Since 1996 he has published accounts of five new species of monkeys. But, his backyard is a jumble of creatures unknown to science; monkeys hanging around waiting to be named, and to have their lives documented in a scientific journal. He has said that he will name the other discovered species after people who pay to help create nature reserves in the region.

Meanwhile, a Brazilian scientist claims to have discovered a previously unknown species of monkey, although other experts say the species may have been documented before. Antonio Rossano Mendes Pontes, a professor of Zoology at the Federal University in Pernambuco, published a scientific description of *Cebus queirozi* in the international scientific journal *Zootaxa*. The primate - which may weigh 6 1/2 pounds when full grown - has long golden-yellow fur

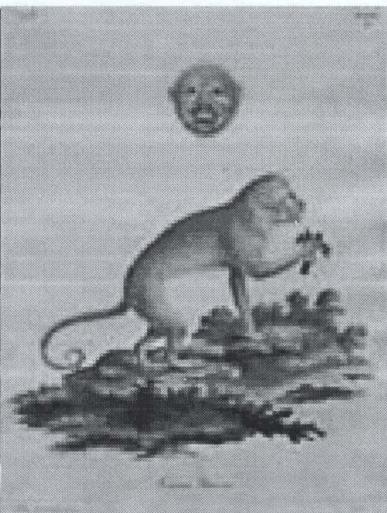
and a white cap on the front half of its head. The species was found in Brazil's Atlantic rain forest in the state of Pernambuco. The Atlantic forest which once covered much of Brazil's eastern seaboard has been reduced by more than 90 percent due to agriculture and urbanisation. It is considered one of Brazil's most threatened ecosystems. Pontes said that he had identified about 32 individuals in a 500-acre fragment of forest and swampland. Due to the extremely limited range of the species, Pontes urges conservation action for its habitat.

"The discovery of this new critically-endangered (overlooked for centuries) species of capuchin within this zone of endemism... where 23 species of endemic birds have already been described, as well as one species of reptile, four species of butterflies, two species of gastropods, at least four species of amphibians, and at least 11 species of trees... highlights the overwhelming importance and

uniqueness of this highly-threatened area for the conservation of the earth's biota," writes Pontes and his co-authors". It also points to the great lack of information on its mammalian fauna, and the urgent need for surveys in order to understand their distribution and status throughout the region."

New Newt

Two individuals of a possibly undescribed newt species have been found for the first time at an altitude of 1,156 m in the Xuan Son National Park, midland Phu Tho province of northern Vietnam. Experts have provisionally identified the species as 'tylototriton species nova'. It belongs to the *Tylototriton* newt genus of the *Salamandridae* family and is similar to a newt species reported in Germany's *Salamandra* magazine in November last year



Some suspect Pontes merely rediscovered a monkey called *Simia flava*, named and depicted in a drawing by German taxonomist Johann Christian Daniel von Schreber in the 18th Century but never seen since.

THE DRAGON OF LAKE WEMBU

An often repeated story in books about lake monsters concerns a Tibetan lake known as Lake Wembu. This is sometimes rendered as Wembo or Menbu. The lake is said to cover 310 square miles and be up to 3000 feet deep. It is apparently very rich in fish. The lake is supposed to be the haunt of a dragon like water beast. It is covered with scales, has a long neck and is the size of a house. According to a report in the *Peking Evening News* of June 1980, the dragon had devoured a yak belonging to a local communist party official. The man had supposedly tethered the beast by the lake to graze and went off on business. Upon his return he found only the remains. Something had come out of the lake and eaten the beast. The monster has also been blamed for attacking fishing boats and eating villagers.

I can find no trace of this lake on the Internet save for in repeats of the above story. I have looked in traveller's guides to Tibet and can find no Lake Wembu, Wembo or Menbu. Likewise searching in an atlas has given me no joy. Was the original *Peking Evening News* story a newspaper invention? Did the reporter mistranslate the name from Tibetan into Chinese? Or has the communist government changed the name of the lake? So far the whole thing has been a frustrating dead end. If any readers have visited Tibet or know anything about this obscure story and this possibly non-existent lake could they please get in touch.

OUT OF PLACE



From the Portland Bird Observatory website, October 22nd 2005: "A long and varied list of highlights today, of which the most extraordinary involved a Great Bustard that was first seen flying south over Southwell during the afternoon. A little later it appeared over the Bill from where it flew back north along the West Cliffs and was last seen leaving the island heading north-east over Fortuneswell and Portland Harbour; the bird was wearing yellow wing-tags - seemingly number 06 - and is believed to have wandered from the Salisbury Plain reintroduction project. Other notable sightings included 3 Tree Sparrows and a Yellow-browed Warbler at the former Easton Fire Station, 7 Bearded Tits at the former Weston Craft Centre, a pre-dawn Barn Owl on the Bill Road, single Lapland Buntings over Top Fields and Cheyne, a Great Spotted Woodpecker at the Bill, single Continental Coal Tits at Culverwell and Cheyne and 3 Woodlarks over the Bill. Among the commoner migrants Wood Pigeon and Ring Ouzel were the feature



species of the day; 1,700 of the former left to the south over the Bill and at least 30 of the latter were scattered widely around the island".

Bustard update:

Since writing the notes above we have received confirmation that the bird seen at the Bill was a wanderer from Salisbury Plain. David Waters, the director of the reintroduction project, has e-mailed as follows:

"I can confirm that the Great Bustard in your excellent photos is one of this year's birds. This bird was not fitted with a radio transmitter and had not been seen since her release onto Salisbury Plain at the end of August. She flew out of the release pen on the day she was released and has not been seen before today. We have no idea where she has been since then and had written it off as probably deceased. We are delighted she is alive and well.

The rest of this year's releases are doing well and things are much improved on last year, with the birds being much more mobile."



....AND FINALLY RICHARD?

Man needed surgery after sex with hedgehog

A Serbian man needed emergency surgery after he had sex with a hedgehog on a witchdoctor's advice. Zoran Nikolovic, 35, from Belgrade, says the witchdoctor told him it would cure his premature ejaculation. But he ended up in an operating theatre after the hedgehog's needles left his penis severely lacerated. A hospital spokesman said: "The animal was apparently unhurt and the patient came off much worse from the encounter. We have managed to repair the damage to his penis."

Richard's Comment: What a prick!



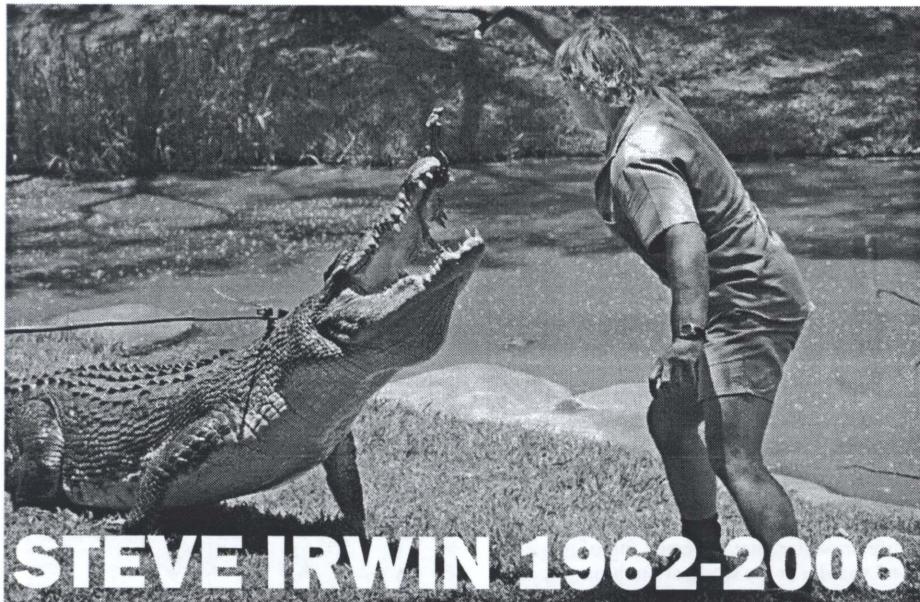
The picture above was taken from a posting on the 'Book of Thoth' website - a paranormal research site. Below is some of the witness' account. "A friend of mine went on vacation to Australia, and he e-mailed me this picture a week ago - he said he snapped a picture as soon as he saw the animal, and the flash made it run away. He said it was small, like a puppy, and it ran awkwardly towards a larger 'striped German-shepherd /Kangaroo thing', and they both disappeared into the brush.

He called it a "Striped Puppy Kangaroo Thing", and he sent it to me because I used to be a vet tech and can ID almost any animal, and am especially good with dog breeds. I think he may have seen 2 Thylacines, but it's not a good picture. He took one as they were running off, too, but you can't see anything in it except bushes and the night sky. When he showed me the picture, I told him I thought they may be Tassie Tigers, and that he should tell someone. I

also told him to hold on to his pictures since in my research I read that sometimes when people report sightings park rangers confiscate their evidence. He wrote me the next day saying that everyone he talked to told him he didn't see a Tassie Tiger, and he said a policeman he mentioned it to threatened to take him in for pranking. When he told the cop it wasn't a prank, the cop told him "You didn't see anything, understood?" Anonymous witnesses always ring alarm bells with me. The photo however is fairly clear. Sadly the head is out of shot, as it has been with several other alleged thylacine photos. The stripes look too far apart for an adult thylacine and they seem to go too far up the back of the animal.

But then again, it was supposed to be a pup. The creature also seems to have a piece of missing skin on its hind leg. The patch looks very neat and tidy for a naturally occurring injury. I think thylacines still exist, but I'm not sure if this photo shows one. RF

THYLACINE PHOTO?



STEVE IRWIN 1962-2006

When I heard Steve Irwin had been killed I thought it was just another hoax. Stories of the Crocodile Hunter's death or maiming had been circulating on the Internet for years. Sadly this time the story was true. That the seemingly invincible Steve could be killed by such a relatively harmless creature as a stingray beggars belief. It's like the Incredible Hulk being downed by a pea-shooter.

Steve was one of those blokes you thought would be around forever. I have worked with dangerous animals including big crocodiles but Steve just seemed to have a charmed life. He certainly took some risks I personally would not like to. But he was a born showman, and TV just loved him. David Attenborough will always be the king of the wildlife documentary jungle, but Steve ushered in a new hands-on approach that has been widely imitated, but never bettered.

Steve was born in 1962 in Melbourne. His parents ran a reptile park that was later to become the renowned Australia Zoo. Steve grew up surrounded by some of the world's most spectacular wildlife. He learnt how to catch big crocodiles from his dad. He captured many 'problem crocodiles' that were in conflict with humans and relocated them to safe areas. Without Steve and his team most of these animals would have been killed. Steve also perfected new ways to capture crocodiles that lowered the risk to both man and beast. In 1992 he met his wife Terry, and their honeymoon consisted of a crocodile trapping trip. The pair filmed the footage; that modest film became the first ever episode of '*Crocodile Hunter*', Steve's hit show on Discovery. The programme took Steve and Terry all across the globe in search of all kinds of wildlife, like a latter-day Armand and Michaela Dennis. It was every zoologist's dream.

OBITUARIES

It was during these adventures that Steve discovered a new species of freshwater turtle, *Elseya irwini* - Irwin's turtle. He also visited Tasmania on the track of the Thylacine. Steve didn't see one but believed that they still existed. Predictably after his death rumours sprang up that he had filmed a 'Tassie wolf' and kept it secret.

Although he had an exuberant presenting style (a sort of antipodean Tarzan) he took his work seriously. Despite the fame that came with 'Crocodile Hunter's' success he was not in the TV game for the money. He put all he earned back into Australia Zoo, and many conservation projects around the world including anti-poaching patrols in Sumatra to protect tigers. As well as this, 'Crocodile Hunter' made zoology accessible for children and has helped to inspire a future generation of conservationists. Steve's enthusiasm was infectious. More than any other wildlife presenter, Steve seemed full of joy and in total wonder at the world about him.

As with anyone who is a success he attracted critics, very few of whom are zoologists.

Even if you didn't agree with his style no decent person could question his passion for conservation. Without Steve and his dedicated team literally thousands of animals would be dead. The world needs more Steve Irwins; people ready to risk everything to help our fellow creatures. With his passing we have lost a true champion of the wild, a conservation hero.

That Steve was truly loved around the world was readily apparent in the genuinely moving service held at Australia Zoo and broadcast on 'Animal Planet'. Among those giving eulogies were Russell Crowe and the Australian Prime Minister.

Most poignant was his daughter Bindi who describe her Daddy as 'her hero'.

We can take some solace in the great legacy that this remarkable man has left, and the fact that his son and daughter will doubtless grow up into conservationists themselves.

Good on ya Steve

RONNIE BARKER 1929-2005

Ronald William George Barker, OBE, was an English comic actor and writer. His best-known appearances were alongside his long-time comedy partner, Ronnie Corbett, in the very popular TV variety show *The Two Ronnies*; as Norman Stanley "Fletch" Fletcher in the sitcom *Porridge* and its BAFTA award winning sequel *Going Straight*; and working with David Jason in *Open All Hours*. His skills as a character actor, his love for and facility with the English language, and his gift for comedy made him a well-loved performer, and a favourite of the CFZ.

SYD BARRETT 1946-2006

Roger Keith "Syd" Barrett was an English singer, songwriter, guitarist, and artist. He is best remembered as one of the founding members of the group *Pink Floyd*. Barrett was active as a rock musician for only about seven years before he went into seclusion. His creative legacy and quintessentially English vocal delivery have since proven remarkably influential.

If there hadn't been a Syd Barrett, there would never have been a *Pink Floyd*, but there also would never have been a *Jon Downes and the Amphibians from Outer Space*, and without the money Jon earned on their last tour, he would never have set up the CFZ. Think about that one for a moment...





NIGEL KNEALE 1922-2006

One of the world's most influential, and best-loved science fiction writers, Nigel Kneale died on Sunday, October 26 aged 84. Kneale was born in Lancashire but grew up on the Isle of Man surrounded by myth and legend. This was to have a great influence on his work. Perhaps more than any other writer Kneale melded science fiction with ancient folk lore, a cocktail that had explosive results.

Kneale is best remembered for his Quatermass scripts. Professor Bernard Quatermass was the head of the British Rocket Group, a space programme instituted shortly after WWII. In his first adventure *The Quatermass Experiment* (1955) Quatermass battles a parasitic alien that grafts itself to unfortunate astronaut Victor Caroon. It transforms him into a titanic, Lovecraftian beast that absorbs other life forms. In the climactic battle Quatermass electrocutes the monster as it crawls over scaffolding on St Paul's Cathedral.

The next adventure *Quatermass II* (1955) pitted the Professor against disembodied aliens that fall to earth in a meteor shower and possess human hosts. The slaves create an artificial alien environment inside a factory to grow bodies for their extraterrestrial minds. *Quatermass and the Pit* (1958) is perhaps the best of Kneale's scripts. Whilst extending the London Underground some workmen unearth what they think is an unexploded bomb. In fact it's something much more deadly, a Martian space craft. Inside are the mummified remains of giant Martian insects. Also unleashed is an awful telekinetic maelstrom, and visions of 'goblins'. It turns out that the horned insects are the inspiration for The Devil. The Martians experimented on our ape like ancestors to create man. The 'goblins' are psychic holograms from this time. The Martian gene is what makes man so aggressive. The film climaxes in a 'wild hunt' where possessed people carry out a purge of

lesser humans whilst a giant image of an alien devil looms above London.

Quatermass the Conclusion (1979) is the most downbeat of the scripts. It's set in a horribly feasible near future when society is collapsing and crime is rife. A group of deluded young folk called the Planet People have created a pseudo religion around the idea that aliens will transport them to a better place. In fact they are being harvested up by a vastly powerful, unseen intelligence that sucks up their life force via standing stones.

One of Kneale's short stories '*The Creature*' concerns the hunt for the yeti. It was turned into the film '*The Abominable Snowman*' (1957) by Hammer, and featured Peter Cushing on the trail of giant psychic apes. In '*The Murrain*' (1975) - a one-off play - Kneale returns to his old favourite of ancient legend colliding with modern day life. Here a vet finds that local people in a remote village believe that the sickness in their animals is a curse from a witch. Upon investigation, the vet is horrified to find a frightened old woman being hounded and starved by a superstitious mob. It's powerful stuff.

A monster from *Quatermass and the Pit*



Even in his non-science fiction writing, Kneale manages to slip in the strange. In an episode of the Napoleonic drama '*Sharpe'* (1995) he introduces occult Aztec sacrifice. In an episode of *Kavanagh QC* (1997) he references the genetic experiments of Josef Mengle. In '*The Year of the Sex Olympics*' (1968) Kneale successfully predicts the mind-numbing rise of reality television with uncanny accuracy. In '*The Stone Tape*' (1972) he once again returns to the potent mix of folklore and ScFi as he explores the idea that events, emotions, and other older 'things' can be recorded in stone.



He was widely considered the father of television science fiction and was a hero to all at the CFZ.



MYSTERY CATS DIARY

RABIES IN BIG CATS

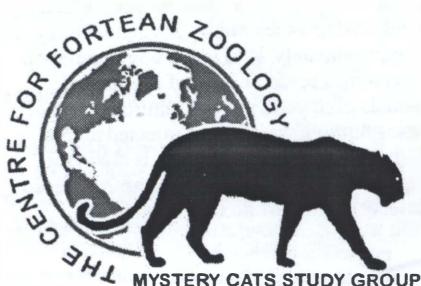
By Marcus Matthews

I was scratched by a Barbary Ape in Gibraltar in 2001 while eating a picnic at the top of the rock. It made me think of the risks of infectious diseases such as rabies. The British Isles have been free of classical rabies for many decades, but because of the existence of the disease elsewhere there is concern about rabies being reintroduced by imported animals. All rabies susceptible animals entering the UK are required to spend six months in quarantine, unless arriving under - and complying with - all the conditions of the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS).

According to the U.S. National Center for Infectious Diseases website, rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals mostly

transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. Rabies is an acute, fatal encephalomyelitis caused by neurotropic viruses in the family Rhabdoviridae, genus Lyssavirus, according to the *Traveller's Health Yellow Book*. The vast majority of rabies reported to the Centres for Disease Control and prevention (CDC) each year occur in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes. Domestic animals account for less than 10% of the reported rabies cases. Rabies virus infects the central nervous system, causing encephalopathy and ultimately death. Early symptoms of rabies in humans are non-specific, consisting of fever, headache, and general malaise. As the disease progresses, neurological symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, hypersalivation, difficulty swallowing, and hydrophobia (fear of water). Death usually occurs within days of the onset of symptoms.

Over the last 100 years rabies in the United States has changed dramatically. More than 90% of all animal cases annually now occur in wildlife; before 1960 the majority were in domestic animals. The principal rabies hosts today are wild carnivores and bats. The number of rabies related deaths in the United States declined from more than 100 annually at the turn of the century to one or two per year in the 1990's. Modern day prophylaxis has proven nearly 100% successful. In the United States, human fatalities associated with rabies occur in people who fail to seek medical assistance, usually because they were unaware of their exposure.



Although human rabies cases are rare, the estimated public health costs associated with disease detection, prevention, and control have risen exceeding \$300 million annually. These costs include the vaccination of companion animals, animal control programs, maintenance of rabies laboratories, and medical costs, such as those incurred for rabies postexposure prophylaxis (PEP). Accurate estimates of these expenditures are not available. Although the number of PEPs given in the United States each year is unknown, it is estimated to be 40,000. Often rabies becomes epizootic or enzootic in a region, the number of PEPs in that area increases. Although the cost varies, a course of rabies immunoglobulin, and five doses of vaccine given over a 4 week period typically exceeds \$1,000. The cost per human life saved from rabies ranges from approx. \$10,000 to \$100m, depending on the nature of the exposure, and the probability of rabies in a region.

Customarily, the level of international resources committed to the control of an infectious disease is a response to the associated human morbidity and mortality. For most infectious diseases, this data adequately reflects the deserved public health attention. It is difficult, however, to estimate the global impact of rabies by using only human mortality data. Because vaccines to prevent human rabies have been available for more than 100 years, most deaths from rabies occur in countries with inadequate public health resources and limited access to preventive treatment. These countries also have few diagnostic facilities and almost no rabies surveillance. Under-reporting is a characteristic of almost every infectious disease in developing countries, and increasing the estimated human mortality does not in itself increase the relative public health importance of rabies.

There is, however, one oft-neglected aspect of rabies that does affect the perception of its importance. Rabies is not, in the natural sense, a disease of humans. Human infection is incidental to the reservoir of disease in wild and domestic animals; therefore, a more accurate projection of the impact of rabies on public health should include an estimate of the extent to which the animal population is affected and the expense involved in preventing transmission of rabies from animals to humans. An additional figure is needed to complete the global picture of rabies. The best estimates of the impact of rabies on a country and the public health resources available within that country for rabies control are found in data for the number and distribution of cases of rabies in domestic animals.

Despite evidence that control of dog rabies through programmes of animal vaccination and elimination of stray dogs can reduce the incidence of human rabies, exposure to rabid dogs is still the cause of over 90% of human exposures to rabies and to over 99% of human deaths worldwide. The cost of these programs prohibits their full implementation in much of the developing world, and in even the most prosperous countries the cost of an effective dog rabies control program is a drain on public health resources. The estimated annual expenditure for rabies prevention in the United States is over \$300 million, most of which is spent on dog vaccinations. An annual turnover of approximately 25% in the dog population necessitates revaccination of millions of animals each year, and the reintroduction of rabies through transport of infected animals from outside a controlled area is always a possibility should control programmes lapse. Reservoirs of wildlife rabies, virtually



unknown in Asia and tropical regions are also potential sources of rabies infection for dogs in Europe and North America.

In 2006 I visited Tucson, Arizona where there had been nine inches of snow for the first time in fifty years in Pima County, and wild animals were coming down from the surrounding mountains in search of food. I saw a dead Javelina (peccary) at the side of the road one morning on the way to the local Wells Fargo Bank. Javelinas are a pig-like animal with a dark, bristly coat. They live in the well-vegetated deserts of Southern Arizona and feed on cacti, seeds, fruit, small animals (including snakes, birds, and rodents) and invertebrates. They are primarily nocturnal. This was not the only kind of animal around in the desert.

Shortly after I returned from Arizona a report of a rabid bobcat appeared in the *Arizona Daily Star*.

There was a incident at the Skyline Country Club when a rabid Bob-Cat attacked a golfer and was beaten to death by members of the Golf Club according to the *Arizona Daily Star* issue of Wednesday, 4th April, 2006. The female bobcat had been seen around the locality. The article ran:

"Rabid Bobcat attacks golfer"

Skyline CC Players beat animal to death at course. Rabies caused a bobcat to attack a golfer Tuesday morning at the Skyline

Country Club, a Rural/ Metro spokesman said. The attack by the rabid female cat sent Jerry Crown, 69, to the hospital with puncture wounds and cuts to his legs. Rabies "would have a real large play into what the bobcat did. Most of the time they will leave the area very quickly" if they encounter humans, said Battalion Chief Rick Flores, a spokesman for the Rural/Metro Fire Department which responded to the incident. "If they are rabid, they are much more aggressive." Catalina Foothills resident Crown and a partner beat the animal to death with golf clubs after the bobcat attacked Crown on the 18th fairway. Crown was treated and released from Tucson Medical Centre on Tuesday afternoon, several hours after his two-minute confrontation with the wild animal. The cat had been seen on the grounds of the country club, near North Swan Road and East Skyline Drive, earlier in the morning, with a gash to her face. But an employee of a private wildlife service who had been called to the scene by the club's officials said he opted to let the cat return to the desert rather than capture it and take it to a wildlife rehabilitation center for treatment.



ANIMALS & MEN

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Wildlife specialist Chris Clark said later that he might have taken the same action had he dealt with the situation again and he wished he had captured the animal. Crown's brother, Loren Crown of Covington, Tenn., said his brother didn't want any information released about his condition. "It doesn't feel good to get bit by a bobcat", said Loren Crown, who would not comment further.

The dead bobcat tested positive for rabies later Tuesday. Crown will receive a series of five rabies shots over the coming month to make sure he doesn't get the disease, said Patti Woodcock, a Pima County Health Department spokeswoman.

Authorities estimated the animal's weight at between 25 and 40 pounds. It was about 2 feet high and 3 feet long. Bobcat attacks on people are rare, although two attacks occurred in the Tucson area in the same week of January 2004. One came at the Lodge at Ventana Canyon in the Foothills, the other in Midtown Tucson.

Many times bobcats that typically run from humans can get used to people and even attack them once they become adapted to an urban setting. But rabid bobcats have no fear of dogs or humans, said Hans Koenig, an official with the Arizona Game and Fish Department in Tucson.

"It is really unusual for a bobcat to go out of its way to take a chunk out of someone", Koenig said. Wildlife specialist Clark said he was called to the country club at 9am. Tuesday because the bobcat had been seen inside the country club's spa. When he got there, the cat was hiding amid pool equipment outside the spa building.

Basically, ideally the best thing to do would be to lock myself in with the bobcat, but he'd already got outside the building." Clark said. Then the bobcat walked toward the country club entrance, pausing every 25 feet or so. Clark essentially tried to herd the bobcat into the desert, by standing where he didn't want the cat to go. The animal walked over to another building, and then went into a wash south of the country club.

Clark said he let the cat go back into the desert because he believes bobcats are resilient, and that the animal either would have gone off and died on her own or recovered. "We're not out to catch every animal in the desert, just the ones in people's houses", said Clark, who has four years experience in his job. "They live out in the desert."

Clark said he felt badly about what happened to Crown but felt he could only make decisions based upon what he knew. He said he was in touch with Game and Fish officials while he was at the country club. "It's an imperfect world and you can only make decisions based on what you know. You can't make decisions after the fact, in hindsight, Clark said. "Normally, they don't attack people. Normally, they keep to themselves, they run away when you approach them."

Darlene Braastad, owner of a Southeast-side wildlife rehabilitation centre, said given that the bobcat's injury was small and that it would have had to have been captured and tranquillized, she might have been better to capture the animal, but that would have been a huge risk for Clark, and others involved in a capture. Game and Fish had asked for Animal Experts' assistance in this case-which the company provided at no expense-after country club officials contacted the state agency. Koenig said he couldn't comment on Clark's decision to let the animal return to the desert. "The folks who did the call probably handle a lot more bobcats a year than I do. If he felt that the animal would survive better in the wild that is his decision. It is not unusual to let an animal slightly injured back into the wild."

Since then, due to increasing drought conditions, coyotes and bobcats are coming right into Tucson residents' gardens. This was an interesting case and certainly unusual, but not unique. Some years ago, I had a close encounter with a lynx near Priddy in the Mendip Hills of Avon and Somerset where the cat arched its back and hissed before

jumping over a wall in November 1986. If cornered the cat could easily have bitten me as it went into a old corrugated iron cattle shed and I did not want follow it in and corner. It. The animal appeared to be living in a badger set under the shed.

In 1996 the Rev. Ken Slogett's twin boys aged 12 had a close encounter with a large black big cat near Pewsey on the edge of Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire. They were playing with string and yoghurt pots when this cat appeared. It ripped the coat of one of the boys before being scared away by their dog. Such encounters have occurred elsewhere in the UK, and one wonders what would result if the cat had been infected with rabies. Further information on the level of rabies in other countries around the world is available on the World Health Organisation website. Information on rabies in Europe can be found on the Rabies Bulletin Europe website. EC Regulation 998/2003 on the non-commercial movement of pet animals applied from 3 July 2004. The Regulation, operated as the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) allows cats, dogs, ferrets, domestic rabbits and rodents which comply with certain conditions and are from qualifying countries only to enter the UK without going into quarantine.

Rabies in Bats - European Bat Lyssaviruses (EBLV)

Rabies affects bats as well as terrestrial animals. A strain of rabies called European Bat Lyssavirus (EBLV) has been found in Daubenton's bats in the UK on four occasions. There was also a fatal human case of rabies in Scotland in December 2002.

- If you find a sick or ailing bat you should not approach or handle it but seek advice from the Bat Conservation Trust Helpline on 0845 130 0228. If you see a dead

bat, you should also ring the Helpline for advice before attempting to handle it.

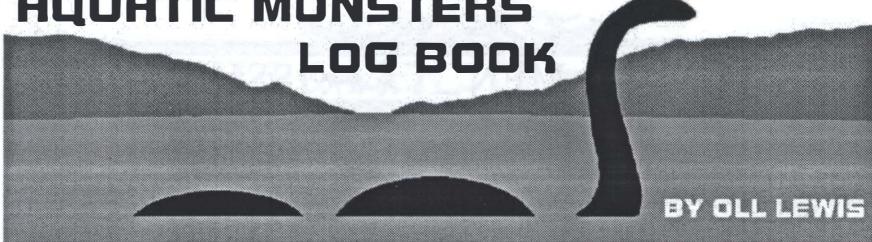
- If you find a dead bat you may wish to send it to the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) for rabies testing under our passive surveillance scheme.
- For more details of sending a dead bat to the VLA, and before you handle it, please contact the Bat Conservation Trust helpline.

Defra has a Rabies Contingency plan which would be used in the event of an outbreak. Public consultation on the draft rabies contingency plan closed on 4 March 2005. A summary of the consultation responses and the draft plan can be viewed on the Defra website. The spread of rabies from animals to humans is controlled jointly by Defra and the Department of Health. Plans for dealing with this aspect of rabies control is contained in the *Memorandum on Rabies* issued by the Department of Health. Hopefully this makes it clearer who to tell if you see a case of suspected rabies in the UK. Although there have been several reported attacks/close encounters on people by big cats in the UK, the overwhelming evidence is they stay away from people and the advice is leave them well alone and don't corner them.

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AQUATIC MONSTERS LOG BOOK



BY OLL LEWIS

Oogopogo gets a bit of chilli powder on his tail

A retired American, Walter Linklater, believes he may have photographed Oogopogo in the small Mexican town of Tecohitla.

Sceptics may note that Mexico is some distance from Oogopogo's normal home of British Columbia in Canada but Mr. Linklater believes that a skull he photographed, with 'eye sockets' about half a metre in diameter, that had been cut off a 12 metre long body, is related to Oogopogo, not the creature itself. The skull appears to be that of a whale displayed upside down and where the lower jaw slots into the skull, may be mistaken for eye sockets, a common misconception that the CFZ have often demonstrated to its visitors using the Durgan Beach pilot whale skull. This was also the opinion of Ellen Pedersen, chair of biology department at Okanagan College, who thinks that

the skull is that of a humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) but neglects to mention that the skull is being displayed in the incorrect orientation.

Whale carcass causes monster rumours

Whilst on a fishing trip, Russian fisherman

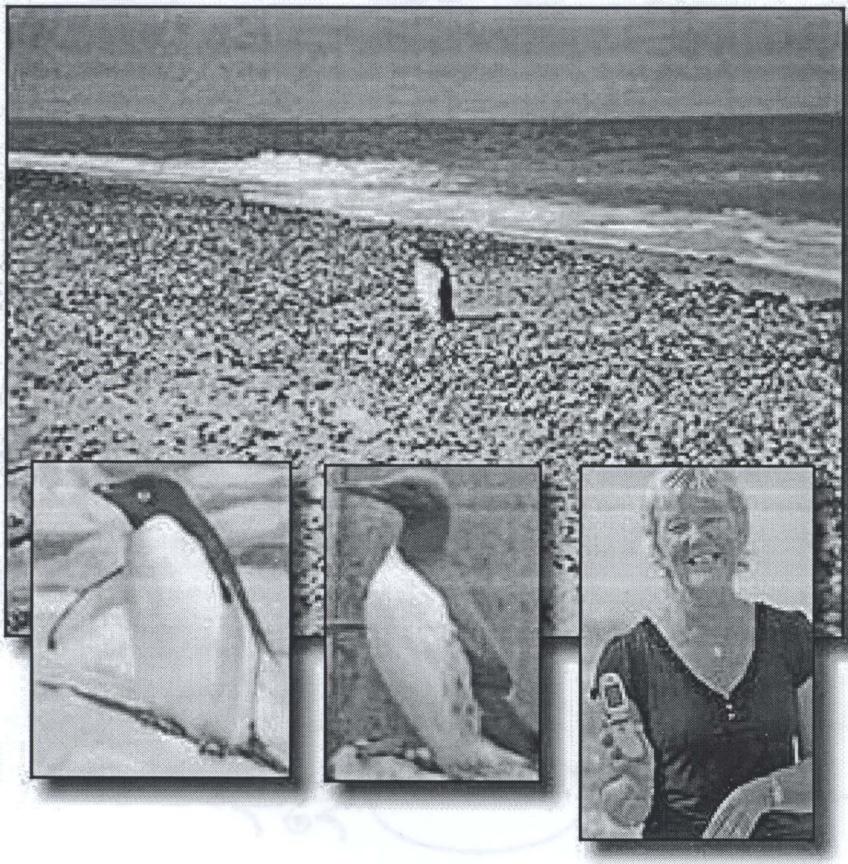


www.cfz.org.uk

on the island of Sakhalin in eastern Russia came across what looked like the body of a hairy sea monster. The rotting carcass was around 7m long and its grey skin appeared to be covered in black fibres 5cm in length. It also had a tail measuring 40cm wide and teeth adapted for tearing and slicing meat. Despite hopes from the local press that the creature could be a plesiosaur, the teeth and the lack of nostrils, not to mention a distinct lack of a long neck, count against this theory. The carcass does, however, look like a rotting whale.

Penguins a-broad?

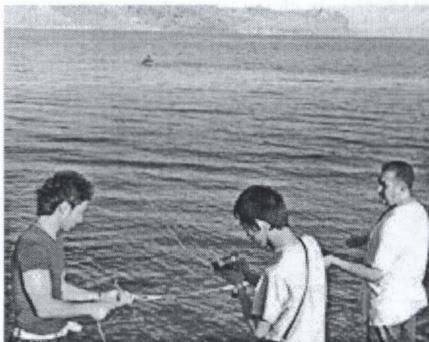
Jean Edwards saw and photographed what she believed was a penguin at California beach, Yarmouth. The nearest zoo - at Banham - confirmed that they were not missing any penguins, but attempted thefts of penguins are surprisingly common. One recent theft occurred on the Isle of Wight last Christmas. Several experts, including Kieran Copeland, animal care manager at Hunstanton Sealife



Sanctuary, have commented that the beak looks a little too thin to be a penguin in the blurry photograph and may be a cormorant.

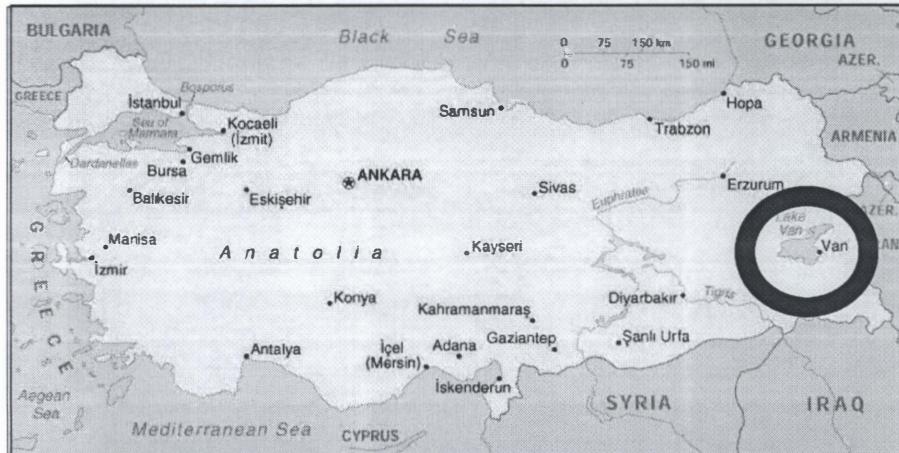
Monster filmed in a Van

A Japanese film and documentary crew claim



to have filmed the monster of Turkey's Lake Van. Takano Hideyuki, Mori Kiyashi and Suezawa Yasufumi from Shosetsu Tendai magazine went to Lake Van to interview witnesses and were surprised to spot a large monster-like object moving across the lake 300 meters away after they had finished their research. They submitted the video to Van Yuzuncu Yil University for analysis where scientists said that the video was too murky to be able to reach any definitive conclusions.

The Lake Van monster is said to be black, fifty feet long, have spines running down its back and resembles a 'dinosaur'. It was not reported until 1995 though local churches have dragons carved onto them. In 1997 a local man, Unal Kozak, a teaching assistant at Van University, captured the creature on video. He has written a book about the monster.



Don't tell him Pike!

Legends have circulated around Llangorse Lake, Wales, of a monster inhabiting its depths since at least the Middle Ages and it is thought that sightings may have been caused by the lake's unique giant pike. The average size of pike caught in UK waters is between 4 to 12 lbs and the official record catch (verified with photographs) stands at around 46 lbs. In 1846 however a 68lb fish was caught in Llangorse Lake, and specimens continue to be caught there far in excess of average-sized pike. Cases

uncovered by interviewing anglers of the lake include a 36lb animal (52 inches long) caught by a metropolitan policeman in 2004 and a 28lb pike caught there this September.

Both fish were thrown back into the lake alive and unharmed. It has been suggested that the pike caught in 2004 may be the same pike that attacked a water-skier, Darren Blake, in the lake in 1999.

Blowing on the Wind

Whilst on the subject of larger than average pike, it was recently brought to my attention that in 2003 a 29.5 lb pike was washed up on the shores of Lake Windermere in 2003.

The pike measured 42 inches in length and apparently pike of this size are caught on the lake every now and again. (See pic on left)

As well as the occasional large pike, Windermere is famous for the Tizzywizzie, a comical beast with the body and head of a hedgehog, bee-like wings, and a squirrel's tail that is alleged to have been seen around Lake Windermere for the past 100 years.

The Tizzywizzie is a proven hoax, and would have been zoologically completely impossible anyway, due to the fact that the anatomy of insects and mammals are completely different (insects do not have a blood circulatory system, for example). It would therefore



The Windermere Investigation Team. L-R Richard, Kevin, Lisa, Mark, Kelsey (sitting), Jon, Corinna



be impossible for a mammal to have insect like wings. Another folkloric resident of the lake is the white horse of Windermere that is said to walk over the waters of the lake from shore to shore whenever one of the towns around the lake is in danger. However, the waters of Windermere, and its neighbour Coniston Water, have a new claim to cryptozoological fame.

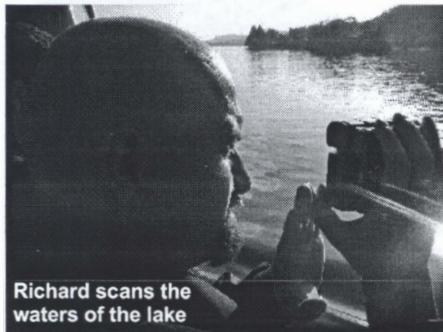
Jon Downes takes up the story:

On 23rd July 2006, between 12 and 1 o'clock, Steve Burnip, a holidaymaker from Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire was standing with his wife and some friends on Watbarrow Point, a small rocky promontory just below Wray Castle on the western shore of the lake. It was a fine July afternoon; one of the warmest on record. They saw a disturbance in the water that looked like a boat wake. It was an animal which appeared to be at least twenty feet long and which was moving faster than a rowing boat,

approximately a minute, no visible eyes or facial features could be seen. Steve had a camera in his pocket – a powerful digital instrument with 8 megapixel capacity, but by the time he thought of using it, the creature was too far away.

He did take a photograph, which we have seen. It appears to show several slate-grey humps in the water, approximately fifty yards away, but for personal reasons Steve – at the moment at least – is loathe to release the picture to the press.

A week or so later, he told the story to the editor of a local newspaper – a personal friend – and on Friday, 18th August we were contacted by a reporter from the *Westmorland Gazette* who had googled the subject of giant fish in the UK and found that, after our encounter with a giant catfish in Martin Mere, Lancashire during 2002, we were



Richard scans the waters of the lake

generally considered to be the UK's leading experts on the subject. We were immediately interested and as a result of our conversations, the paper ran a follow-up story appealing for further witnesses. Over the next month we received six further eyewitness accounts. Interestingly, one was from the late 1950s, and another from the early 1980s. The other contemporary sightings followed in much the same pattern as Burnip's, but – for me at least – the most exciting account came from Kevin Boyd, an amateur diver who is extremely conversant with the wildlife of the area, and has seen eels of over six feet in length on a number of occasions, both in Windermere, and in the neighbouring lake of Coniston Water. On 11th October, a five-person team from the Centre of Fortean Zoology travelled to the Lake District for a three-day fact-finding mission.

The team consisted of:

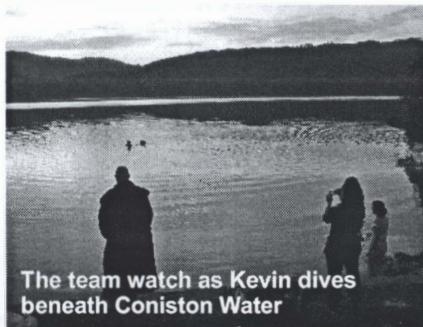
- **Jonathan Downes.** Team leader, Director of the CFZ, author, cryptozoologist, and journalist specialising in freshwater creatures.
- **Richard Freeman.** Zoological Director of the CFZ, expert in Lake Monster and Dragon stories worldwide, author and cryptozoologist.

the CFZ, expert in Lake Monster and Dragon stories worldwide, author and cryptozoologist.

- **Mark North.** Assistant Director of the CFZ, author, and folklorist.
- **Lisa Dowley.** Amateur Archaeologist and CFZ investigator, and driver of one of the mission's two cars.
- **Corinna James.** Administrator, writer, Jon's fiancée, and driver of the other CFZ car, on her first cryptozoological investigation.

They were also accompanied by Jon Ronson; journalist, author, documentary filmmaker and radio presenter. He has been a mate of the CFZ's for a decade, and has long wanted to accompany us in the field. With Jon were Laura, a producer from BBC Radio 4, and Dominic, a cameraman from *The Guardian*.

Mr. Gaskell – another witness – told the team that the weather in July had been dry and fine, with little breeze, and the surface water was warm and calm. They have, on many occasions, seen fish jumping and surfacing in the lake, but on this particular day they were travelling at a speed of about 4 knots near the yellow 6mph marker at the entrance to the Ambleside basin, at the north end of the lake, when they both saw a disturbance in the



The team watch as Kevin dives beneath Coniston Water

water, about 20 yards astern. Mr Gaskell told me that they had seen something very large surfacing and diving again, which looked like a seal or dolphin without the fin, leaving a large wake and ripples. They did not see it again that day, or anything similar since.

Before it got dark on the Thursday evening Kevin - by now the team's diver - had placed a number of baited sacks out in the bay. Each sack contained cut up fish and squid, Predator Plus and some rocks. Richard and Jon had carried out a similar exercise at Loch Ness the previous November, but were surprised at how difficult the process on Coniston was going to be. The currents were very strong under water, and the bait sacks drifted considerably. However, eventually the process was complete, and Kevin came back to shore. Just after dark, he went back in the water, this time armed with an underwater camera, to see what he could find.

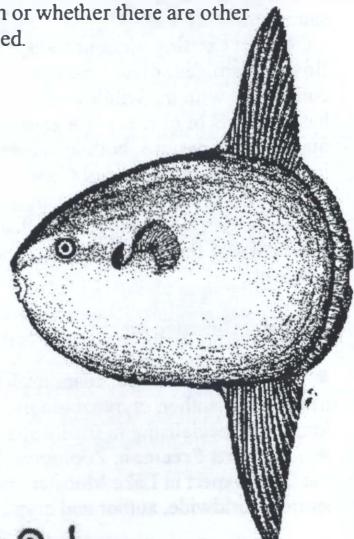
On this occasion they were unlucky. Kevin did manage to get some remarkable pictures of the lake floor, of pike and of perch, and all in all, although they didn't either catch or photograph any eels, we felt that our first exploratory dives had been a qualified success.

But we will be back next year. The CFZ are also hoping to involve various community groups like the boy scouts, the sea cadets and the angling clubs. As we scan the depths of the lake and attempt to tempt the beasts with Predator Plus, we want as many 'foot soldiers' as possible stationed on the banks, and on the islands, with binoculars, long range cameras, and notebooks.

This could be the largest cryptozoological investigation ever mounted on British soil.

Here comes the sunfish (and it's alright)

A sunfish (*Mola mola*) was caught in the waters of Weymouth's inner Harbour in September and offered to the local Sealife Centre. Despite the rarity of sunfish in British waters the aquarium turned down the offer and the sunfish was released in the open sea off the Dorset coast. Although sunfish are still rare in British waters, which are usually too cold for the species, reported sightings and catches have grown in regularity over the last 5 years. Another fish was spotted off the Dorset coast in July, a sunfish turned up in the Irish sea off the Welsh coast last year, and a sunfish was caught as far north as Scotland a few years ago. At present it is not known whether the increase of these piscine pioneers has been caused by the slight warming of seas around Britain or whether there are other factors involved.



THE PURPLE NECKED ROCK WALLABY

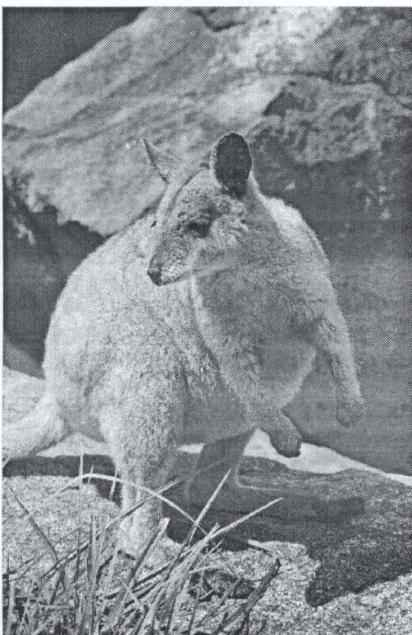
By Ruby Lang

I first encountered the rare purple-neck rock wallaby in a breeding enclosure in suburban Sydney, tucked away at the back of Macquarie University - far away from their natural habitat of Queensland's dry and arid hilly northwest. I was on assignment for a downmarket little magazine called *Aussie Post*, a colourful weekly rag featuring girls in bikinis that celebrated Australia in all of its less salubrious guises - from beer-drinking to bawdy humour. Not exactly a career highlight, but a fun ride while it lasted.

Unusual animal discoveries weren't the magazine's usual fare, but it was a slow week and several interviews with country and western singers had fallen through (the magazine's other staple feature) so I had little trouble convincing the editor that a story about a punky-looking macropod would be a laugh. So the photographer and I set off to visit Dr Mark Eldridge, the biologist who had recently rediscovered *Petrogale purpureicollis* - as it was subsequently scientifically christened - and laid to rest a 77-year mystery surrounding its existence.

It was 2001 and Eldridge had just wowed the zoological world with his paper in the *Australian Journal of Zoology*. The story would go on to feature in numerous newspapers and magazines around the globe, but for now we seemed to be the only ones interested in Eldridge and his purple-necked rock wallabies. Our heads were filled with images of ridiculous-looking purple wallabies ostracised by their native wildlife peers, so we lost no time in getting across to the university to meet Eldridge and his Fortean fauna.

We chatted amiably as he led us down to the enclosure, which we reached by walking through several other inter-connected enclosures featuring, among other animals, emus and red kangaroos - both species noted for occasional bouts of violence involving humans. Our steps were brisk as we tried not to make eye contact with a large male red standing well over my diminutive 5'3 frame. From a more feisty branch of the macropod family, red kangaroos can easily be pissed off. I once saw footage of a man being raked by the sharp hind leg claws of





a red kangaroo and I had no desire to find out first-hand just how powerful those hindquarters can be when faced with the unresisting, slightly plump flesh of my torso. 'Big Red' eyed us like a fat biker would a posse of strangers in his local pub. We finally slipped through the next enclosure and swung the gate shut behind us before anything happened that we might regret.

The purple-necked rock wallaby, distinguishable by the beautiful purple pigmentation of the fur around its face and neck, was first discovered by a European biologist by the name of A.S Le Souf in 1924 in the Mount Isa region.

But, in typical fashion, the relevant authorities of the time refused to believe the outrageous story of purple-tinted wallabies hopping around Queensland's rugged bushland - especially when it was a story being put about by a foreigner. Eldridge says Le Souf's sighting was chiefly disputed because of the rarity of the colour purple among other Australian mammals. People just didn't believe it was possible.

"No-one believed him, everyone just said 'No, they can't have purple necks, they must be rubbing themselves on some rock and getting this funny colouration,'" Eldridge says.

"Because it is secreted through the skin, once the animal is dead the pigment rapidly fades, so by the time Le Souf got the specimens back to Brisbane or Sydney from North Queensland, the colour had gone - so it just looked like a very plain, normal-looking rock wallaby." Le Souf's experience proved to be not so dissimilar to our own. As we rounded the corner to see the wallabies, the small furry marsupials shot around their enclosure as if

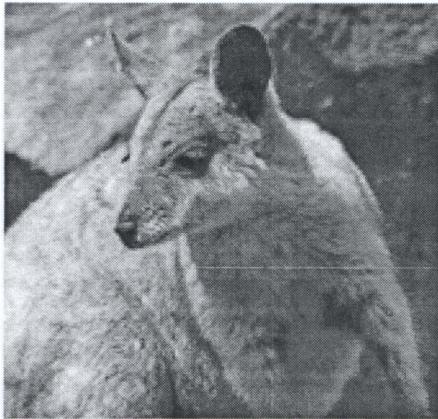
speed. And they were looking decidedly, well, brown. "*They're a little nervous,*" Eldridge explained, referring to their speedy antics. So is our photographer, I thought, shooting Andrew an apologetic look as it hit us simultaneously that the famed purple crest was, well, a lot less purple than we'd conjured up in our magazine spread fantasy.

"*Crap,*" I heard him mutter. The word 'crap' echoed in my own thoughts. In the right light, you could make out the faintest pink blush through the fur, but nothing that would be distinguishable on the printed page.

"*It's hormonal,*" Eldridge weighed in, noting our professional distress and realising that our photo opportunity had been somewhat compromised. "*Last week it was really, really purple,*" he assured us earnestly, as if, perhaps, we thought he'd made the whole thing up.

"*The colouring of the face is much darker in males than in females and it comes and goes through the year. Sometimes it will be very intense, a very bright purple, and other times it's just a faint pink wash through the fur,*" he went on to explain. "*The pigment comes off - you can rub it off with your hands. It also washes off in water, so after rains they're not purple and then it comes back again. Even the young in the pouch, their skin secretes this purple colouration, so that even before they get their fur, they'll have big purple patches on them.*"

With some resignation Andrew began to snap off pictures, trying to get close enough to the cage to capture the nervy wallabies - one of



whom was pregnant - on film.

Because of their propensity to go from purple to brown to pink, the wallabies were initially lumped in with other east coast rock wallabies species before being transferred to the West Australian Black-footed Rock Wallaby group in the 1980s because of a chromosomal similarity. However, the Macquarie University team - who have been researching Australian rock wallabies since the mid-1970s and the Black-footed Rock Wallaby since the mid-1990s - were convinced that the Purple-neck was a distinctly different species. "We looked at morphology, we looked at chromosomes and we looked at various genetic markers as well and everything said the same thing - these ones are very different and they are as different as species are," Eldridge says.

But, he hastens to add, further research is still needed to determine how widespread the species is and exactly why the purple pigment is secreted. Just why this particular species has

found it necessary to define itself with the colour purple remains a biological mystery. Back at the office, Andrew and I were busy trying to explain the vagaries of Mother Nature to the editor, who sat rigidly behind her desk and glared at us from hooded eyes. We can thank technological advances for what happened next. The magazine's resident graphic artist skilfully added a purple mantle to the picture of the wallaby, but the colouring lost something in the translation. 'Sid Viscous', the wallaby, went to press two days later, no doubt the envy of his purple cousins with a head so vibrantly coloured that it would have been the envy of punk rockers everywhere. Albeit, much to the chagrin of biologists, I'm sure.

Another species of macropod - a tree kangaroo - was discovered earlier this year by an international team of scientists exploring a mountainous region of New Guinea. The group from Conservation International also found new birds, frogs, butterflies, and palms, on the upper slopes of the Foja Mountains in eastern New Guinea, part of Indonesia.

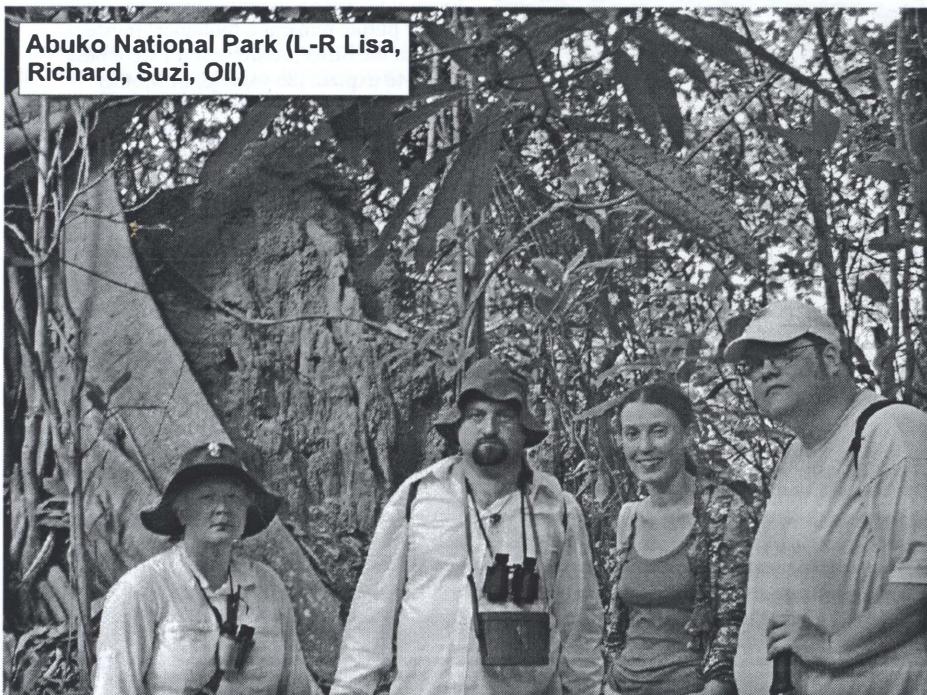
Most of the natives live close to the sea where game is readily available. The scientists claim this was the first scientific group to explore the area where wildlife was abundant.

Some of the species found were:

- * Twenty new species of frogs
- * Four new butterfly species
- * Five new species of palms
- * The world's largest rhododendron flower
- * New birds such as the wattled honeyeater; breeding grounds of the golden-fronted bowerbird and Berlepsch's six-wired bird of paradise which were thought extinct.
- * A new species of tree kangaroo as well as six species of others that are rare elsewhere.

EXPEDITION REPORT: GAMBIA 2006

Abuko National Park (L-R Lisa, Richard, Suzi, Oll)



The CFZ 2006 expedition was the first excursion we had made into the Dark Continent. I was accompanied Dr Chris Clark, Lisa Dowley, Chris Moiser, Oll Lewis, and Suzi Marsh. We were searching for two monsters, the dragon-like Niki-Nanka and a 'sea monster' supposedly cast ashore on Bungalow Beach in the 1980s.

On our first day, we walked down to Bungalow Beach where, in 1983, Owen Burnham was said to have discovered the carcass of a strange marine creature christened 'Gambo'.

Unfortunately, in the intervening 23 years, Bungalow Beach has become a lot less remote.

Several hotels have sprung up, and also a nightclub called *Destiny's*. The nightclub's beer garden looked as if it may well have been erected right over 'Gambo's' resting place! As the club belonged to the president's brother, currently being investigated for fraud, any request that we hack through the concrete



with picks might not go down too well.

A little later on, we came to a market at Kotu. Here, jewellers have been making silver Ninki Nankas for years. Chris Moiser knew one of them.

One of the jewellers, Baka Samba, was a mine of information. He had not seen Ninki Nanka, but his late uncle, a renowned hunter, had. Many years ago his uncle had seen the dragon up-river. He died within five years of the sighting, and Baka was convinced that seeing the dragon had sealed his fate. The description his uncle gave was vague. *"Huge and terrible"* was one phrase. It possessed four legs and a horrible head, and he said that it had fire in its mouth.

Baka's nephew, Baba, told us that Ninki Nanka resembled a crocodile, but its head and teeth were shaped differently and it had big eyes.

I asked Baka if his shop had been here in 1983. He confirmed that it had, and I went on to ask him if he recalled a large creature having been washed up on the beach in '83. He told me that he did remember this, and that the creature was a large dolphin 9 feet long. He told us that it was still alive when it had been washed up, and that some white men in a boat had tried to rescue it. However, it vomited and died on the beach, whereupon it was buried.

The following day we travelled to the Abuko National Park. Abuko is Africa's smallest National Park at 105 hectares. It is, however, teeming with wildlife. I enquired of our guide Musa Jatta if he knew of Ninki Nanka. He said that Ninki Nanka was like a huge python, big enough to swallow a whole cow. It had legs and wings like a bat's wings, and could breathe

fire, and could move around on land and in the water, but he did not know if it could fly. Musa went on to tell me that, sometime between 2001 and 2003, a dragon had caused a lorry to crash when it had crossed a road, leaving a great furrow in its wake. It was during heavy rain that the creature was on the move.

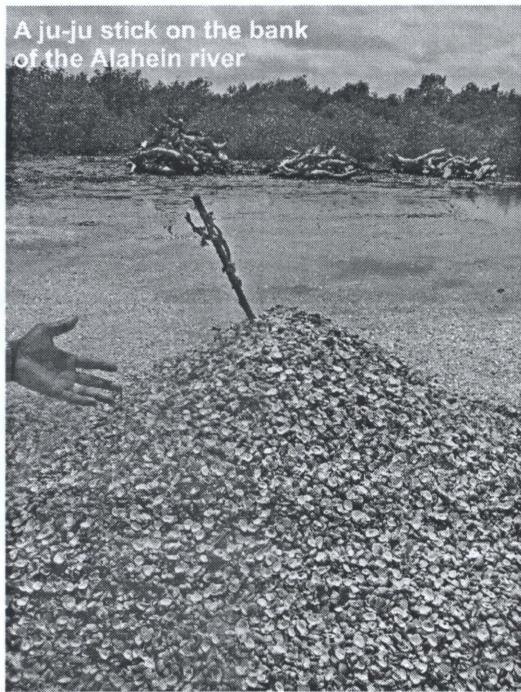
Abuko is an excellent reserve, swarming with wildlife, including Nile crocodiles, and many monkeys and birds. At one point the party was attacked by a spitting cobra.

Chris Moiser had made some enquiries about the story of a night watchman who was supposedly killed by the dragon. He turned up an amazing fact; his grandson worked as a guide at Abuko!

We found the man in question - a chap called Hassan Jinda. Hassan related his grandfather's strange story. Hassan's granddad, Papa Jinda, saw the dragon twice - firstly in 1943 then again in 1947.

Back in the 1940's, the area that is now Abuko was used to provide water to Bathurst (now Banjul). One night Papa saw that something had damaged the water pipes at the pumping station. Then he saw the culprit, a Ninki Nanka. It was unimaginably huge, and when its head was in sight its tail could not be seen. Its body was covered with scales that shone like diamonds and its head bore a crest of fire. As it moved it would pause, look up and down, and then move on as if searching for something. Papa saw the dragon again in 1947. After this encounter he had pains in his legs and sides, and his hair began to fall out. He died two weeks later.

A ju-ju stick on the bank of the Alahein river



Hassan said that he knew a man who had what he thought was Ninki Nanka scales. The old man had found them in Abuko several years before.

We were taken to the man who said he had discovered the scales on the jungle floor. He kept them in a pouch about his neck and used them to make charms.

The 'scales' seemed to be mineral or man made in origin. We took one for analysis.

The following day, I showed the local fishermen the picture of 'Gambo', and asked them if they had ever seen anything like it. They identified the drawing as a sawfish - peculiar animals related to sharks and rays. I asked both men about Ninki Nanka. The first said that one had killed a man from his village. Apparently, the man had been out with his dog, when the animal had started to bark furiously at some bushes. On investigation he found a Ninki Nanka coiled in the undergrowth. It had a face like a kangaroo and a forked tongue. The man ran back to the village, but died half an hour later. The dog, however, was unhurt.

The second man said that Ninki Nanka was like a snake, covered in scales that were like a mirror in which you could see your reflection.

He said it could grow as big as a palm tree, and as an example he pointed out some large palms about 60 feet tall. He went on to say that, at first Ninki Nanka was small, but when it grew big it moved into the sea.

We rose at 5.00 am for the long trip to Kiang West National Park, the mangroves therein being a reputed lair of Ninki Nanka. We picked up Bakary at Abuko as he knew the way, and could also show us the crash sight where the furrow caused by a Ninki Nanka had forced a lorry off the road. At the crash site the rusted remains of a lorry lay beside the road about 250 feet from a bridge.

The bridge had supposedly been erected over

the great furrow the dragon had left, as it crawled through the rain-soaked dirt that fateful night. The remains of the lorry had been cannibalised, and the rust on it was very advanced - the wreck looked as if it had been lying there from before 2001; the earliest stated date of the crash. We looked at the bridge, and could see that it was, in fact, a drainage culvert. The erosion on the concrete made it look older than five years.

On the edge of Kiang West, we stopped at a small village and picked up a man named Bula, who would lead us to the dragon's lair. Assan and Kamara stayed with the vehicle, whilst the rest of us tracked out through the sparse forest towards the lake. The lake, known locally as Yesyes, was more of a flood-plain for the River Gambia. Due to the lateness of the rain, its levels were very low and most of it was a blinding white of salt flats. Suddenly Bula became frightened, stopped dead in his tracks and refused to go any further, hiding behind some bushes. Bakary translated as Bula told us that he was too scared to approach the mangroves at the far end of the lake. He said that his people had used parts of the lake for cultivation for years, but they dare not go near the swamp because of the dragon.

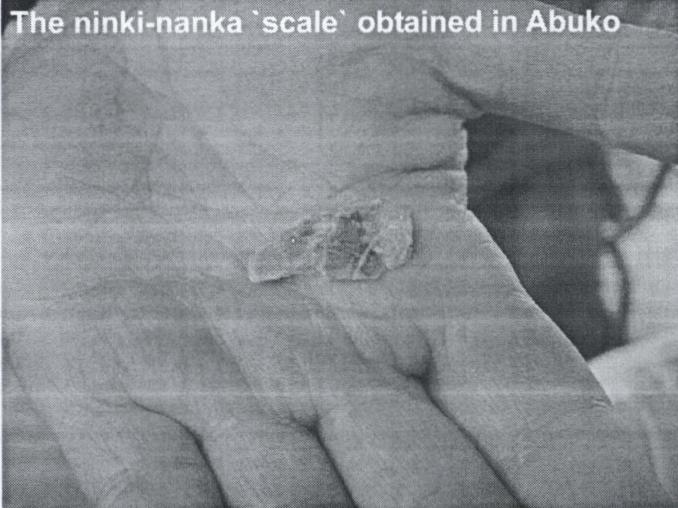
There had once been a village closer to the

swamp. After his uncle had seen the dragon, the villagers panicked, the place had been abandoned and it had long since fallen down. We walked further along the lake-bed, until we reached the edge of the swamp. Here, Bakary's nerve left him, and he stayed behind, as the four of us pushed on into the thick mangroves.

The swamp had an eerie silence, and it was easy to see how it could have got an evil reputation. Malaria-bearing mosquitoes in the mangroves may have caused many deaths, and the dragon legend was a way of keeping people away from the area.

Finally, the swamplands began to thin and we saw the river. It was about a mile wide at this point and mudskippers lollopped down its banks. We saw the abandoned huts, door-less

The ninki-nanka 'scale' obtained in Abuko

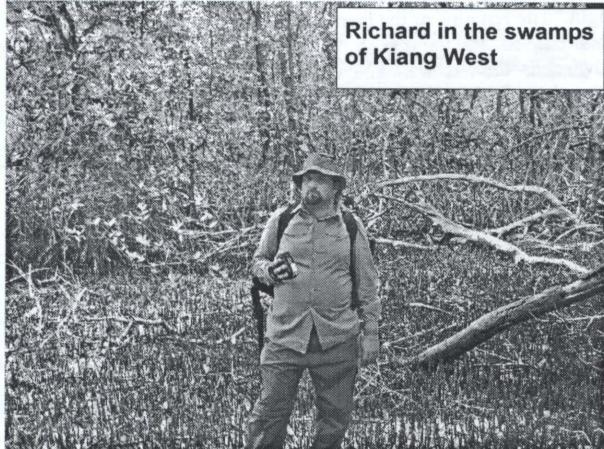


and window-less, looming, skull-like in front of us. I inspected them in the hope of finding bats or snakes, but had no luck. And if the Ninki Nanka was here he didn't show himself.

We trekked back to where Bakary and Bula were waiting for us. We dropped off Bula, and then went to pick up another man named Momomodu, who was a park ranger. Momomodu claimed to have seen the Ninki Nanka less than three years ago in Kiang West. He told us that he saw the dragon emerge from a hole in the ground, and watched it for more than an hour as it crawled around.

He was the only first-hand witness we had come across so far, but his description was one of the most fantastical. He said the Ninki Nanka had a horse-like face and was covered with scales that reflected like mirrors. The colours he recalled were mostly green and black, and it bore a crest, "like feathers", that hung down across its face. Its claimed size was staggering - 50 meters long by a meter wide; in other words around 160 feet long. He added that it had neither legs nor wings and resembled a titanic snake. His sighting had lasted for an hour. About two weeks afterwards, he fell sick and lesions began to form on his skin.

He went to see an Imam, an Islamic holy man, who knew that he had seen a dragon, and that its baleful influence had caused his illness. The

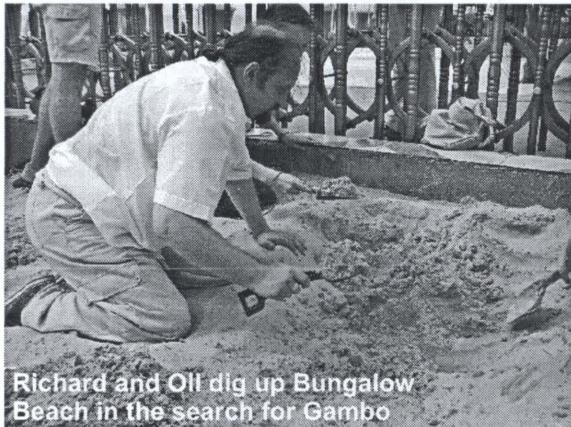


Richard in the swamps of Kiang West

Imam brewed a herbal potion that cured him.

Next day we headed to the south of the country, 40km or so down to the Alahein River. We paid some fishermen to take us a mile or so down river in dug-out canoes. We crossed over to the far bank into Senegal. We walked for about half a mile into Senegal, observing mudskippers and fiddler crabs. I asked the boatmen, one of whom was from Mali, what they knew of Ninki Nanka. The Mali man, who, like the man from Kiang West, was called Momomodu, said that it could transform itself from a tiny snake into a gigantic one. The other boatman echoed his story. Oll came up with the idea that the Ninki Nanka is a vestige of a pre-Islamic Animist religion and could, perhaps, be some python deity that has become demonised.

We had been studying the maps more closely, and thought that the carcass of 'Gambo', if it



Richard and Oli dig up Bungalow Beach in the search for Gambo

was still in existence, was just about beyond the nightclub walls. The target area was a small patch of sand between a palm tree and the wall of *Destiny's* Nightclub. So we set out to excavate the area.

We excavated two deep holes in the sand, and it swiftly became apparent that, even at quite a modest depth, the sand became wet, which would have destroyed any remains after 23 years. Also we found that there was much disturbance. Chunks of concrete from the construction of the nightclub were discovered, as well as more recent items such as drinking straws. Whether it was a dolphin or not, 'Gambo' would now be long gone. Back at the hotel, the reception manager, Bubulha, who had heard a radio interview I had done earlier, had some information for us. He said that, as a boy in the late 1960s or early 70s, he had heard a radio broadcast warning people to stay away from the Fajara area. A Bishop Moloney had seen a dragon crawling out of a rocky

area of standing water (close to the postal station) and entering the sea. It left a furrow in its wake.

Later in the day we interviewed a security guard named Sueliman. He told us that his mother - as a girl - had seen a Ninki Nanka at a place called Upper Niumi. She had been out looking for palm nuts when she and a friend had come across the dragon coiled up in a hole. It had a crest like a fowl on its head that hung down, and this crest seemed to have writing upon it.

At the same time a hunter who was up a tree saw the monster. Sueliman's mother did not speak of the sighting, but the hunter talked freely of it and subsequently died. Sueliman said that the dragon's crest was supposed to have words from the Qur'an written upon it and that if you read the words you died. Also, if you spoke about the sighting to too many people you would also die. Perhaps the 'words' on the crest refer to some kind of veining or patterning. Arabic writing lends itself to naturally occurring patterns due to its flowing, rounded, nature (unlike the straight edged western lettering). Ergo, the name of Allah is often found in the pattern of aubergine seeds and in other fruit and vegetables. Sueliman offered to guide us to the dragon's lair, but would not approach it himself. However, the area was far away on the north bank and we simply did not have time to go there.

We visited Mandinari, where, beyond the tatty little village, lay a huge expanse of mangroves. A rickety jetty of flimsy looking logs stretched out into the swamp. Suzi and Chris Moiser walked out onto it for quite a way, but it began to give under my weight so I decided to stay on the edge with Lisa. I spoke to a local youth called Mustapha and he told me what his mother had told him about Ninki Nanka. He said it was a huge animal covered in scales like mirrors. On its head was writing, and if you were wise enough to read the words you would live. The Ninki Nanka could also read the words written on human heads (thoughts?).

So what are my thoughts on this beast?

Most people have not seen it for themselves - their mother/father/uncle saw it long ago, and the only first-hand witness gave a description that was very hard to believe. Several said that Guinea was the place to search for Ninki Nanka. I think some form of huge snake may have existed in former times, but is now extinct in the Gambia. It may still lurk in the less well-travelled areas of west and central Africa. The animal has become a bogeyman, and has left behind a very real fear. Perhaps the influence of Islam has demonised this creature from the past.

It is interesting that the descriptions of a giant crested snake are akin to those I was given in Thailand back in 2000. There, however, I spoke with many more first-hand witnesses. I postulated that this could be a species of surviving Madtsoiid, a group of gigantic primitive snakes believed extinct for 10,000 years.

£9.99
To CFZ members

expedition report 2006
gambia

In July 2006, The J.T.Downes memorial Gambia Expedition 2006 - a six-person team: Chris Moiser, Richard Freeman, Chris Clarke, Oll Lewis, Lisa Dowley and Suzi Marsh went to the Gambia, West Africa. They went in search of a dragon-like creature, known to the natives as 'Ninki Nanka', which has terrorized the tiny African state for generations, and has reportedly killed people as recently as the 1990s. They also went to dig up part of a beach where an amateur naturalist claims to have buried the carcass of a mysterious fifteen foot sea monster named 'Gambo', and they sought to find the Armitage's Skink (*Chalcides armitagei*) - a tiny lizard first described in 1922 and only rediscovered in 1989. Here, for the first time, is their story... With an introduction by Jonathan Downes and forward by Dr. Karl Shuker, and a section on African cichlids by Simon Wolstencroft

IN SEARCH OF KENTISH MANBEASTS

By Neil Arnold

Whilst the man-beasts known as the Yeti, Bigfoot, Sasquatch, Skunk Ape, Orang-Pendek and the Almas are known worldwide, and pursued greatly by cryptozoologists, and even some scientists, strange, bipedal humanoids from the United Kingdom are lesser known. Ape men have been reported from the hills of Wales, as have bipedal were-creatures, and there is also the well-known shadowy figure, the 'Grey Man' of Scotland's Ben MacDhui. Several counties within England such as Sussex and Lincolnshire are rumoured to have witnessed shadows cast by fleeting man-beasts and monkey-men, although such lore is reasonably brief. The most known cases of English man-beasts are without doubt the tales of the 'Shug Monkey', the Athelhampton 'ape', Devon's ghost ape, the Bolam 'beast' and a handful of others.

Kent is known as the 'Garden of England'. A patchwork quilt of rolling fields and vein-like lanes entwined with rivers and streams through the rolling woodlands. Folklore is rife, from road spectres, to mystery cats, and from phantom hounds to castle apparitions. However, man-beasts have never been on the agenda and have never been chronicled, until now. Only since stumbling accidentally on such brief reports have I managed to construct this article pertaining to such phenomena. In fact, the only 'humanoid' case which has been chronicled, as far as I'm aware, is that of the Hythe 'being' which scared a group of youths in the 1960s. This became a case quite well known within UFO circles, and sneaked its way into such classic works as John Keel's *Strange Creatures from Times & Space*, but it mainly made its name in connection with the Mothman sightings of West Virginia which took place not long after the original Kent

incident. For those unfamiliar with the case, here is a brief summary of what took place on that cold, night of November 16th in 1963:

"Four young people", Keel wrote, "...were walking home from a dance along a quiet country road near Sandling Park, Hythe, Kent. (...) John Flaxton, 17, was the first to notice an unusually bright star moving directly overhead. They watched it with growing alarm as it descended and glided closer and closer to them. It seemed to hover and then dropped out of sight behind some nearby trees. 'I felt cold all over', Flaxton recalled. He and his friends had seen enough. They started to run. The light bobbed into view again, and this time closer, floating about ten-feet above the ground in a field some two-hundred feet from the panic-stricken quartet. 'It was a bright and gold oval', one of them reported. 'And when we moved, it moved. When we stopped, it stopped'. Once more it went out of sight behind the trees along the road. Then suddenly there was the snapping of twigs and branches and a huge black figure shuffled out of the bushes towards them. 'It was the size of a human', Mervyn Hutchinson, 18, told police later. 'But it didn't seem to have any head. There were huge wings on its back...like bat wings'.

Five nights later Keith Croucher, 17, saw a similar object crossing a football pitch on the Sandling Estate. Then, two nights later John McGoldrick and a friend began investigating the reports and allegedly found an area that looked as though it had been flattened by a craft of some sort, but their most impressive discovery was a set of large footprints two feet in length and nine inches across. On December 11th, McGoldrick and a newspaper reporter saw a strange light in the sky that illuminated

woods. I've personally never been overly interested in reports that link Bigfoot-like creatures and UFOs, and although the Hythe apparition was not exactly described as a Bigfoot, the case seemed to pick up some amount of credibility and certainly involved a weird humanoid figure. Twenty years previously, in an area of woodland on the east coast of England, the Shirley family were one of only a handful of witnesses to an English werewolf-like creature. The following report, although brief, and obtained from an American website called *Cryptomundo*, has, allegedly, been passed down through several generations and stood the test of time as a family incident of the most unusual nature. Pat Shirley, whilst having a picnic with her grandmother in the woods, described seeing a creature that was only described as, "...being covered in flaming red hair", and, "...possessing a pair of huge and powerful jaws". Apparently the beast was seen only briefly before it moved off into the trees.

In 1974, the year I was born, and very, very, close to home, in the small pocket of Walderslade Woods, in Chatham, William Hamper spotted another mystery animal; a black leopard. The woods, at the top of Chestnut Avenue, literally three minutes from my house, were never inhospitable areas, but merely heavy coppices that have since been wiped away by housing estates, leaving only a strip of thicket. His cat sighting took place behind a friend's house between four and six in the evening as it crossed the pathway around twenty yards ahead. The animal was jet-black, around fivefeet in length and was gone in an instant. One year later in woodland on the other side of the village, a woman, who only wants to be known as 'Maureen', had a terrifying encounter of a different kind, a sighting which simply proved that Walderslade's sparse woodlands were being stalked by two very different creatures. But this one was unnatural. What 'Maureen' saw, and never spoke of until she confided in me in 2006, was very much a Kentish Bigfoot, something quite unique. This is an account never before published:

"I was in the woods behind Sherwood Avenue, in Walderslade in the August of 1975. I was eighteen at the time and myself and my ex-husband were about to light a small fire, as it must have been around 10:00 pm, quite dark. My husband was crouched down sorting the fire out and I was standing. It was then that I saw them, two piercing, reddish eyes just around ten yards away. I froze in terror, because this thing was big. It was around seven-feet in height but in the darkness I could make out the bulk of it. It's figure wasn't like that of a man, it was a mass, a hulking figure, like it was hairy. I really thought I'd seen the Devil!". I was intrigued and yet unnerved by the horror in her voice. *"I just stood there and then it seemed to lower, quite slowly and after a few seconds it disappeared behind heavy foliage, but I could sense it was still there. I immediately made excuses to leave and we did, and I kept that terrifying night with me and never spoke to anyone".*

So many reports of this ilk, especially from Kent are all too brief but 'Maureen's' sighting is very impressive.

However, it seems clear that what she saw on the Summer's night was NOT a flesh and blood creature. Were-wolves and Bigfoot-like humanoids cannot exist in our woodlands as real creatures, but maybe as a form that dating back to a time when yarns of Wildmen, or the Wudwuse were recorded. This does not mean to say that I doubt the existence of undiscovered man-beasts in the Himalayas or the Pacific Northwest, but in England, and Kent of all places I remain very sceptical. So, what is being sighted?

Well, another Kentish man-beast sighting took place in Friston Park, nr. Newhaven in the neighbouring county of Sussex.

On November 18th, 2002, at 2:30 am, Phil Hayman had parked his lorry up to stretch his legs when he spotted a large figure in the woods. The form

was illuminated by a red light which was situated on a forestry machine in the woods. Mr Hayman was unsettled by the presence and hurried back to his cab but still had time to shine his torch at the being which rushed off into the darkness. Phil claimed that the creature wasn't human because he saw no skin colour reflected in the flashlight beam, and suggested it may have been covered in hair.

In the Winter of 1967, at Winterfold in Surrey, a motorist pulled over on a dark, remote road to clean his windscreens. As he looked along the road he noticed a huge figure standing there which gave off a foul odour. The strange beast seemed to have a glowing, oblong-shaped head! On the night of February 11th 2006, and as reported on the *Unexplained Mysteries Forum*, a similar man-beast was observed in south-east England. Unfortunately the exact location was not given. The witness was taking out the dustbins when he was unsettled by a weird sound he could only describe as low pitched, very deep, like a distant rumble. The strange noise seemed to be coming from the pitch black woods at the end of his garden. As the witness walked down his garden, to the wood, only separated by a fence, he thought he could see two glinting circular objects that seemed to be a dull yellow in colour. The man switched on the security light which seemed to make the two glinting objects glow brighter and the rumbling sound deepen. As soon as the witness reached the very bottom of his garden, the sound almost became unbearable from the woods. However, he managed to get a closer look at the two glinting 'eyes' which he believed were on the sides of a head of some kind of dark form. The 'creature' appeared to be humanoid and covered in hair, and stood over six feet in height. Then, as the rumbling increased, the man finally fled, scrambling back to his house, and slamming the door shut on the cacophony. Later on that night he heard the rumbling again and once more saw the dark, muscular form, only this time it was in his back garden. The being seemed to move around in peculiar hopping fashion, and had strange humps on its

back. The terrified witness wasn't brave enough to go back into the garden, but the next morning he found all his rubbish strewn across the garden, and the wire fencing, erected to prevent rabbits escaping, was flattened to the ground, and in the woods there were several broken branches as if something had crashed through there.

In 1997 when the local press, especially the *Kent Messenger Group*, were latching onto stories of sightings of 'big cats', one anonymous witness wrote in, on December 5th, to say that he'd spotted a gorilla-like beast in the woods near Blue Bell Hill, not far from Maidstone. During the May of 1961 at Bilington, Kent, two schoolgirls watched in horror as a hairy being emerged from woodland and stood in a nearby field. The form then scurried off towards the trees, but as it turned the girls said they noticed it had a tail.

So, Kentish man-beast sightings are not so scarce after all, and seem to slot nicely alongside other BHM phenomena from Somerset to Northumberland. The main question, however, is where do they come from, and where will they be sighted next? It's very difficult to say when you consider the numerous country-wide reports of animal ghosts, wolf-like humanoids, red-eyed gorillas and phantom monkeys which clearly weren't mentioned as traipsing two by two into Noah's Ark!



weird weekend 2006

REPORT BY RICHARD FREEMAN

This year's Weird Weekend was the largest ever. It always amazes me how the convention has grown in the last few years. I recall when it first started and the attendees rivalled the speakers in number. Now the Weird Weekend is held in a state of the art community centre, and attracts both speakers and punters from all over the globe. Punters just see the talks and the stalls but the whole event was months in the planning.

Thursday saw an open day at the CFZ with a huge marquee (that took ages to erect) kindly provided by Matt Osbourne in which drinks were served. The garden was festooned with life-sized monsters created by Anthony James of *Creaturama*. Lisa Dowley had brought a dragon shaped pinata for the children. We attached this to a tree and let the kids loose on it... Unfortunately the pinata was as tough as a genuine dragon and resisted all attacks. Even 14 year old David Phillips couldn't pierce its scales and managed to smash one of Jon's walking sticks on its hide.

Friday night kicked off with a welcome speech by Jon and myself. And then the speakers began. Being an organiser I spent much of my time behind the scenes or running the CFZ store. Ergo I don't get to see all the speakers. My apologies to those I missed. Bob Morrell of the excellent Apra Books was the first speaker. His lecture was about the beast gods of ancient Egypt.

Next up was Dr Lars Thomas from Copenhagen University. He gave an excellent talk on Scandinavian lake and sea monsters including many from obscure lakes that I had never heard of. Some sounded like encounters with giant wels catfish (recently rediscovered in Denmark) but others were much stranger. One story involved a giant serpent or lindorm that grew beneath a house and destroyed it.

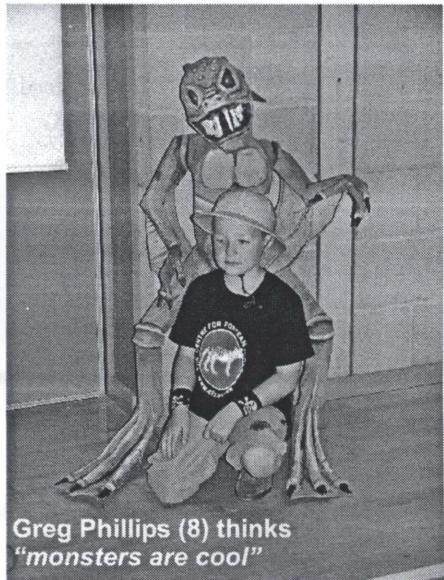
Matthew Williams - master of cropcirclery - gave a talk on strange creatures seen in and around circles. He believes that though they are man-made circles can attract or create genuine paranormal phenomena. Matthew also rounded off the night with a spectacular laser show.



L-R: Larry Warren, Nick Redfern, Corinna James, Lars Thomas, Jon Downes

Saturday is always the busiest day of the Weird Weekend. The spectacularly bearded **Richard Ingram** started us off with a lecture on the decline of civilizations. He was followed by **Lionel Beer** on the search for Camelot. **Andreas Trottman** - who came all the way from Switzerland - gave a talk on Swiss dragons. As with Lars, there was much here that I had never heard of before. This included an egg-like object supposedly passed from the cloaca of a flying dragon and now held in a Swiss museum.

Paul Cropper from Australia had travelled the furthest to be here, and was giving two talks. The first was about a poltergeist case he had investigated with our old mate **Tony Healy**. The infestation of a rural house in the outback was the Antipodean equivalent of the Enfield Poltergeist. **Nick Redfern**, all the way from the US (but Brummie by birth) spoke of government surveillance of Fortean researchers, including **Jon Downes**!



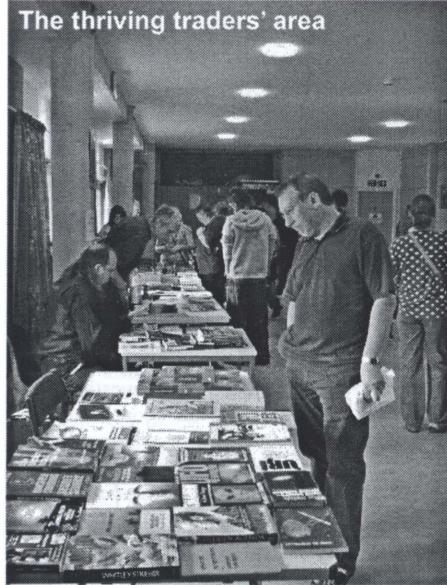
**Greg Phillips (8) thinks
"monsters are cool"**



Jon Ronson, TV presenter and investigative journalist gave a comical talk about the rank mummery at Bohemian Grove wherein some of the most powerful men in the USA indulge in what looks like a glorified school play with cod-occult trappings. Some more paranoid investigators suggested this was a sinister cabal that involved human sacrifice. Jon just seemed to think it was akin to third rate Masonic shenanigans. **Paul** was back next with an amazing talk on the yowie; the Australian equivalent of the yeti. He presented evidence and eyewitness accounts from the time of the earliest settlers right up to the present. He also had us enthralled with accounts of his own investigations. Finally, it was my turn to speak about our expedition to the Gambia in search of the dragon-like Ninki-Nanka, but as an account appears elsewhere in this issue, I won't bore you with it here.

Sunday tee-d off with **Paul Vella** on the sasquatch. Paul's 45 minute talk ran to an hour but no one minded as it was so fascinating. Photos, prints, film and vocalisation were all examined. Folklorist **Jeremy Harte** gave an entertaining talk on how monsters such as wildmen and dragons have been defeated in folk tales by the hero getting them drunk. In fact, there is a tradition that the yeti can be caught if a barrel of potent beer called *chang* is left out for him to drink.

The thriving traders' area



The Quiz

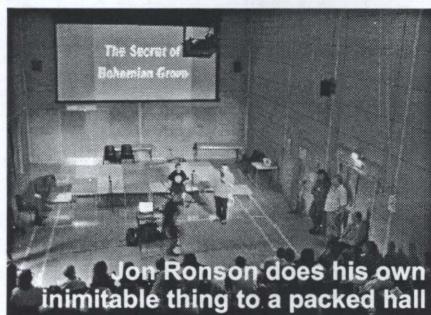


David Phillips (14) doing the onstage sound.

I broke every child labour law in the book that weekend. I think David worked a 62 hour week



Weird Weekend stalwart Chris Moiser (the only speaker who has talked at every Weird Weekend apart from me) lectured on the Wrington Lion, and explained how the recently introduced Freedom of Information Act has made UK big cat research easier. Larry Warren then told us about his experiences on a US airforce base at Rendlesham Forest and how he was directly involved in the biggest UFO scare in UK history. We rounded off with Ronan Coghlan, possibly the most popular and entertaining speaker we have ever had. All the way from Ireland, Ronan regaled us with stories of cloven hoofed, horned goat men from ancient Greece to the modern day. A great end to a great conference. We are proud to say that our new approach, making the event family friendly, and enjoyable to the general public as well as hard-core crypto types, has paid off magnificently. See you all there next year.



CFZ PEOPLE

WEIRD WEEKEND BACKSTAGE PASSES ARE ONLY GIVEN OUT TO THE SELECT FEW

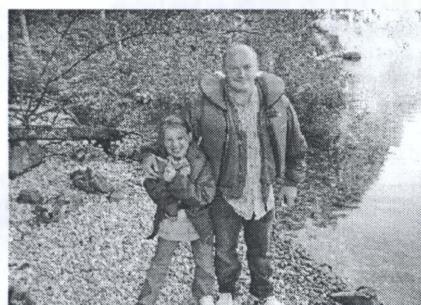


I find myself in the peculiar position of - after a hiatus of a quarter of a century - living back in my old family home in Woolfardisworthy, North Devon. When I first lived here as a child, just after returning from Hong Kong in July 1971, I very soon made friends with the kids next door. Indeed, over the next few years, my brother and I (aged 11, and 7 in 1971), became so close to the Braund family - David (11), Lorraine (9) and Kaye (7), that we were in an out of each other's houses all the time. Sadly, David - who was my best friend for many years - died in 1987, but I remained close to his sisters.

Kaye's eldest son David (now 14) started working for the CFZ in the summer of last year. I have to admit that at first it was just Uncle Jonathan being nice! I hardly knew the boy, and although he had always come across as a polite, well mannered lad, I had no idea that eighteen months later he would not just be a fixture at CFZ Mansions, but that - literally - we could not manage without him.

I have written elsewhere this issue about the flagrant abuse of the child labour laws which took place over the Weird Weekend, but the connection between his family and the CFZ doesn't stop there.

Both his parents and his Grandmother (my surrogate Mum thirty years or more ago), said that they would pop their noses around the door of the venue to see what was going on, but I never suspected (and neither did they) that they would be a fixture all weekend. To see Mrs Braund (wearing an 'Access all Areas Pass' deep in conversation with Larry Warren (who was wearing his outlaw biker colours) about Rendlesham Forest was a sight for sore eyes! I truly feel that I have come home to roost!



DAVEY CURTIS AND FAMILY RETURN TO LOCH MORAR

Notable by his absence at this year's Weird Weekend was Davey Curtis. He had a perfect excuse. After financing 2005's CFZ Loch Morar expedition, he was back for a return trip. This time they managed to explore some of the little islands on the lake, and hope to return soon for a bigger expedition.

CFZ NEWS



CFZtv

It was a nice bloke called Elliot Saunders who really dragged us into the 21st Century. We have had a website since 1997, but in 2003, while Richard and the boys were on their first major expedition to Sumatra, Elly contacted us, and over the next few months taught us more about the changing face of the internet than we had ever dreamed of. He gave us our first proper forum, and helped put the website on the track to where it is today.

Back in 2003 Elly helped us put video footage on our site for the first time. It was a great success, and I had grandiose dreams of having a website called CFZtv which would broadcast CFZ video material around the clock. However, Elly explained, my idea would be prohibitively expensive, purely because of the bandwidth issues involved if more than a handful of people tried to watch the site at the same time. I shrugged, accepted what he said and forgot about it. However, three years later, technology has changed. Harold Wilson is once quoted as having said that "*a week is a long time in politics*". If this is so, then three years is an aeon in the world of technology. We now live in a world of podcasts, webcasts, and mobile phones that people can use to watch TV. A world where small children have mobile phones and their own websites, and a world where if one doesn't do one's best to keep up, one will soon be left behind. In June, I had an email from a geezer called John Gledson. He wanted to collaborate with the CFZ

with a project to utilise the new technology to our advantage. He and his colleagues (who are all frighteningly young), have an impressive background in the new technology. Between them they have worked on popular television programmes, space programmes and the latest 'all singing - all dancing' websites. They can also drink the way that I could at their age, and want to make CFZtv a reality, three years after Elly and I reluctantly agreed that it couldn't be done. We announced that we would be premiering CFZtv at the Weird Weekend, with outside broadcasts, interviews and whatever else the team could put together. Sadly we over-reached ourselves, and although we did manage to broadcast *some* content, it was extremely limited. However, we have all learned from our mistakes, and the new, improved CFZtv website is now up and running.

PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

We are pleased to be able to announce that the following titles will soon be published by CFZ Press. *Smaller Mystery Carnivores of the Westcountry*, by Jon Downes, and *Strength through Koi* - his book of short stories about fish, together with the second volume of A&M reprints, will be out by the time you read this. *Big Bird* by Ken Gerhard will also be available imminently. Other books which will be published soon include:

Neil Arnold's book on zoiform phenomena, Marcus Matthews's book on British big cats, and new titles by Dr Karl Shuker, Nick Redfern, Jon Downes, Mark North, Corinna James, Richard Freeman and Chris Moiser.



Letters to the Editor

The Editor and his band of merry men welcome an exchange of correspondence on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters and would like to stress that opinions voiced are those of the individual correspondent rather than being necessarily those of the editorial team or the Centre for Fortean Zoology. Every attempt is made not to infringe anyone's moral rights or copyright, and we apologise if we have unwittingly done so.

FIRST UTTERANCE

Hello,

I came across your website and your 2004 excursion to southern Illinois searching for "big cats". I just wanted to share a bit of info about big cats in central Illinois. I lived near a small town called Fairview (500 people). It was near the Spoon River and 40 minutes from the Illinois river.

My dad tells stories about camping when he was younger and hearing the cry of something strange.... he crawled out of his tent and saw a big black cat in the tree.

Also living in the heavily wooded areas in central Illinois, there was a period of time where cattle farmers were perplexed by some large animal that had taken down their cows and eaten them. All of the animals had large slash marks in them.

Several hunters in the area claimed to have seen big cat tracks near the creeks.

When I was 16, I was driving home from work on my way from Canton, IL and a large brown animal to my left view caught my eye. It was definitely a large cat... I stopped my car and watched it walk into the woods.

The most recent sighting came from one of our neighbors... maybe a year ago. He was driving near his house on a one lane country road and a deer jumped before his car, with blood flying from its hind leg... directly behind the deer was a large cat.

It is really not so mysterious that there would be big cats in the area. There are more sightings near the Illinois river. I remember people used to say the cats would travel up and down the rivers throughout the midwest looking for food... and occasionally they would branch out to large wooded areas like the ones I lived near.

Thanks for doing this research,

Jessica Buescher
Illinois

SONG TO COMUS

Hi Jonathan,

I'm Bob, who sent you the earwig story. (See issue 37) I saw this quote today on your website:

"It was about an inch and a half in length, and appeared like a very thickset ant with 'knobbly' legs and a fairly heavy chitinous covering. I suspect that it may have been the immature form of one of the small ground mantids, but I am not sure. If anyone reading this either lived, or lives in Hong Kong, and could help me solve a problem which has been 'bugging me' (if you'll excuse the dreadful pun), for many years I would be extremely grateful."



ANIMALS & MEN

ISSUE 39

I remember my grandmother - Guadalupe Reyes Borquez - who had grown up in Parral, Chihuahua, Mexico, telling me about a similar creature. The ones she described were pale in color, almost white. She said they were called "*ninos de la tierra*", [children/babies of the soil/dirt]. She described them as being hideous and they would normally find them in the soil near their potatoes.

She liked to do a bit of gardening, and one day when she was visiting us in Guadalajara, Mexico back in the early seventies, she came and got me and showed me one. It was ugly but very interesting, and it did look somewhat like a small baby, because of the "knobby" legs.

And since I'm here writing this now, I will tell you that I also saw a form of leaf bug last spring floating in a river here in Franklin/Fairview Tennessee. I noticed a leaf floating in the river, but it seemed unusual to see a "fall" leaf floating in a river in Spring.

I picked it up and realized it was a bug! I put it in my snorkel-mask to get a better look at it (I like to snorkel in rivers) and quickly discovered, that it preferred to stay under water. It was $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch long and the reason I noticed it was because it was Spring and the color of the body/leaf was brown/dark rust...and it was not connected to a leaf, as I at first thought...the leaf was part of its body and even appeared to have veins in it. It was amazing; camouflaged as a dead leaf while it fed in the river. I suppose that fish won't notice a floating leaf. I drew it on paper the following monday for my friends at work and will be glad to scan it and send you a copy.

I also read an account of some strange bugs in Mexico described by a Scottish author named

Frances Calderón de la Barca who wrote a book called "Life in Mexico", she wrote it about her experiences back in the 1800's and she was married to the Spanish ambassador to Mexico. She describes several bugs and a rare lizard. One of the bugs she described was like a cross between a cricket and a scorpion...I will send you the quote from the book when I find it again. The point to all of this is, that on one of my visits to see my parents in El Paso Texas one summer back in the mid nineties, I was hiking with my son Andrew and my nephew Tim up in the Franklin Mountains and we saw one.

Now I am aware that you may doubt my "insect" story", since you never put my "giant earwigs" story on your site...but I have proof of this one since I actually video taped it on my Sony hi-8 camcorder. If you are interested, I will make you a copy of the footage.

But I am not going to bother to look through 20 or so tapes unless you are really interested. I have always had an eye for detail and especially the unusual; that's why I have noticed these rare creatures through the years. I really have never had an interest in bugs, but I appreciate the more unique ones and I did collect butterflies when I lived in Mexico.

Thanks,
Bob Borquez
Brentwood, TN 37027

EDITOR'S NOTE: I have written back to Bob, apologising for not having contacted him earlier, (it was during my father's slow, final illness, when - to be quite honest - I am surprised that I managed to get any CFZ work done) and asked him to send me a copy of the images. I shall print them in a future issue..

REVIEW

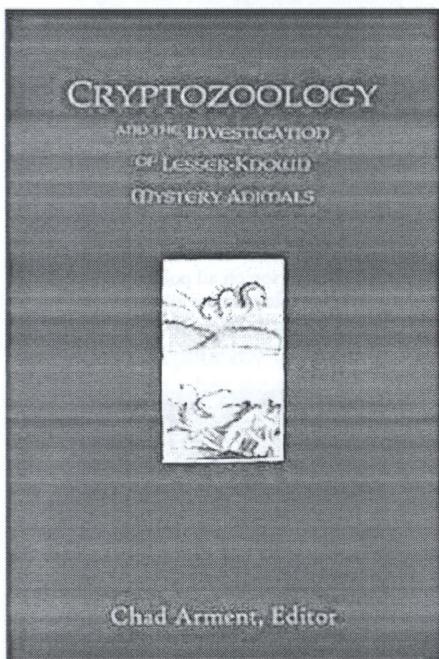


CRYPTOZOOLOGY AND THE INVESTIGATION OF LESSER KNOWN MYSTERY ANIMALS

Chad Arment, Editor

Coachwhip publications

ISBN 1-930585-29-2



This book is one of those little gems that one takes an almost childlike joy in reading. No mainstream publisher would have touched this book with a barge pole (more fool them). It's nigh on impossible to get any book on cryptozoology published but one on such obscure subjects as this would be beyond the pale.

There lies this book's strength. We have all heard of the Yeti, Bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster et al. How may of us know about luminous spiders, or tiny 'dinosaurs' seen in Colorado? The contributors to this wonderful book have recreated a time when the romance of natural history was still in its full bloom. The tantalizing snippets within, fairly reek of discoveries just waiting to be made. Chapters include mysterious pigs, aquatic cryptids in Kentucky, bipedal reptiles seen in the southern US, flying serpents and my personal favourite; the purple rail of Hiva-Oa. In this latter chapter Michel Raynal brings together never before seen accounts in a spell binding article. He even reveals that world famous French artist Paul Gauguin painted one (almost certainly from life) in 1902! Everyone involved in this book deserves congratulations. It is just a shame it is not more widely available in book shops, particularly in light of the mental dysentery that pollutes the shelves of their 'mysteries' section.

ABOMINABLE SNOWMEN:

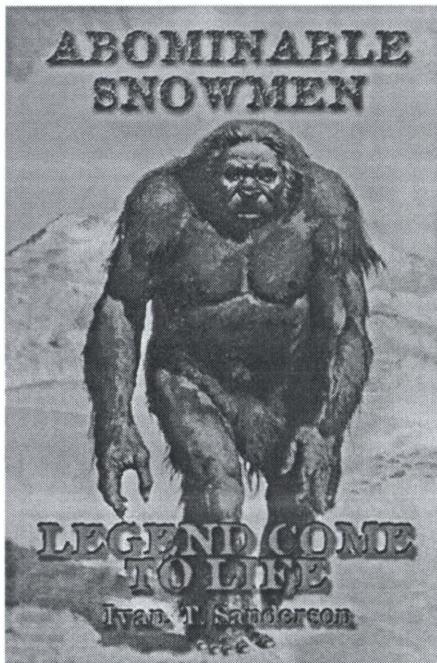
LEGEND COME TO LIFE

Ivan T Sanderson

Adventures Unlimited Press

ISBN 1-931882-58-4

Ivan T Sanderson died way back in 1973. Today he is largely forgotten by all but the most die hard cryptozoologists and Forteans. This is a shame as he did as much to create



the science of hidden animals as Bernard Heuvelmans. There are those who sneer at Sanderson still. Mainly because of his somewhat illogical interpretation of large three toed tracks found in Florida as belonging to an undiscovered species of giant penguin. But we should not cast aside all his research on one mistake. We all screw up on occasion, it's human nature.

Sanderson began as an animal collector who wrote books about his adventures in foreign climes capturing wild beasts for zoos much in the same way as Gerald Durrell. Only later did he branch out into Cryptozoology. In fact it was Sanderson who coined the term.

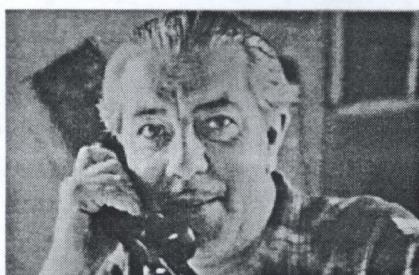
Abominable Snowmen is his *magnum opus*. A 525 page book examining 'ape-men' all across the globe.

I could praise Sanderson's excellent knowledge of zoology and phytogeography (plant distribution), or his research and uncovering of never before seen accounts (both from long defunct publications or straight from the witnesses mouth) or his incredible personal experience in globe trotting and adventure, but it is his wonderful style of writing that hits the reader first.

All the research, knowledge and adventure in the world is pretty useless if you don't know how to put it down on paper. And boy does Sanderson know!

So many books are dry, and stuffy; the literary equivalent of eating a cream-cracker with no butter or cheese. Sanderson's prose is quite the best I have ever read in the genre.

Amusing, insightful and leaving one breathless with a sense of adventure. A lot has happened since 1961, when this book was first published. I don't agree with Sanderson on all points (particularly in his making almost all 'ape-men' hominids rather than pongids) but the book has stood the test of time. I couldn't put it down. RF



THE SYCOPHANT



Spare a thought for poor old Dr Daz! He comes along to Weird Weekend as a punter. Not only do we put him in the quiz team, where his team were soundly trounced by the home team featuring an eleven year old male Shirley Bassey impersonator, but Ronan Coghlan steals his bed!

At one point there were 22 people staying at CFZ Mansions, but most of them were on camp beds on the floor. Ronan noticed that Darren's bed was in far better

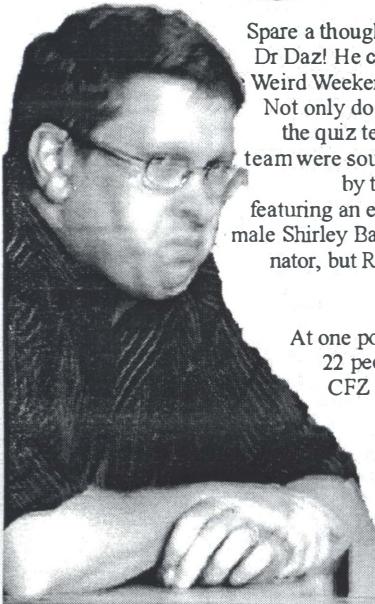
nick than his own and on the second night he pinched it. The entire household was woken by Dr Naish roaring that "*Some bastard has nicked my bed!!!*". The fact that he did it in an extraordinary northern accent, just made the event even more entertaining. Nice one Ronan.

Our beloved Director was heard to remark that with so many people in the house, there was a two hour queue before he could get into his own lavatory, and that the whole affair was reminding him of one of the less salubrious pop festivals from his mis-spent youth. Next year, he says, they will all be camping somewhere else. Like THAT'S going to happen.



Herewith an exclusive still from the CFZtv production '*Eel or No Eel*' which was filmed during the recent sojourn in the Lake District.

You will be able to see the CFZ team as they interview eyewitnesses, and fend off newspapers, and marvel at the intrepid Jon Ronson being carried ashore by the far more intrepid Kevin Boyd, because he didn't want to get his feet wet!



MARK NORTH'S CRYPTOZOLOGY FILES

LOOK!!!!
ITS A SPITTING COBRA
STAND STILL EVERYONE.
HE IS MORE SCARED OF
US, YOU KNOW



LOCATION: ABUKO NATIONAL PARK, GAMBIA
CASE: NINK NANKA

THE CFZ EXPEDITION TEAM GO ON THE TRAIL TO FIND EVIDENCE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE NINK NANKA IN ABUKO. AS THEY JOURNEY INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE FOREST THEY ENCOUNTER A DANGEROUS AND RATHER ANGRY SPITTING COBRA...

Typeset by C.M.Watson

"...No serious mistakes serious."

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